MONTANA READING FIRST
Annual Evaluation Report
2007–2008

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NWREL
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

MONTANA READING FIRST

**Annual Evaluation Report
2007–2008**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the 2007–2008 school year, almost 6,000 elementary students in 31 schools and 22 districts participated in Montana Reading First. Of these schools, 12 were in their third and final year of full grant funding (cohort 2); they also received regular professional development and technical assistance from state project staff members. The remaining 19 schools that continued Reading First implementation were in cohort 1. For the past two years they received reduced funding, invitations to participate in professional development opportunities, and site visits and technical assistance from the state.

The 2007–2008 evaluation of Montana Reading First found evidence of program implementation and sustainability in all areas of the program and continued growth in student achievement.

Professional Development

Montana Reading First provided multiple opportunities for cohort 1 and 2 principals and coaches to participate in professional development. The majority of cohort 2 principals and coaches attended most of these meetings. Staff members found the meetings to be of high quality and relevance and to provide time to network with colleagues; however, coaches thought they addressed observing, feedback, and working with resistance more so than principals did.

Cohort 1 coaches attended meetings more frequently than principals, but both attended these meetings more often than last year. Overall, these staff members were pleased with the quality of training in instructional leadership and coaching. Cohort 2 district coordinators were more likely to attend, and appreciate, meetings with the state reading specialist assigned to their district than to attend the principal and coach meetings.

Reading First schools were visited (generally three times during the year) by their state reading specialist who provided technical assistance, met with staff, conducted observations, and reviewed materials and data. Cohort 2 school staff members found their state reading specialists to be supportive, trustworthy, and understanding; but cohort 1 coaches reported their visits as slightly less helpful than the previous year.

Teachers in cohort 2 schools participated in site-based professional development in summer 2007. They received on-going, classroom-related professional development primarily from their coach, but also from participation in study groups on *Overcoming Dyslexia,* and somewhat through use of *Knowledge Box*. Some teachers received training from district reading staff members and publisher representatives. Cohort 2 teachers' perceptions of formal training and coaching were positive, but less so than last year. While an increased proportion of teachers reported that they were frequently observed by their coach, not all teachers were.

Cohort 1 teachers continued to report receiving less reading-related professional development; however their perceptions of its quality remained positive. The frequency by which they were observed by their coach decreased.

Leadership and School Structures

Cohort 2 district coordinators reported strong support from the state in their implementation of Reading First. Likewise, cohort 2 Reading First schools reported sufficient support from their districts. Most cohort 1 principals agreed that their district supported the continuation of Reading First and that no district programs clashed with it.

Montana Reading First cohort 2 principals and coaches continued to fill the roles assigned to them. Principals conducted walkthroughs, but were challenged in finding time to regularly conduct them and provide feedback. Coaches continued to spend about a third of their time coaching; compared to last year, less time was dedicated to working with data and more was devoted to interventions.

Cohort 1 principals continued to regularly observe most teachers' classrooms, although the frequency of providing feedback has decreased. The majority of the cohort 1 schools maintain full-time coaches; four schools do not even have a part-time coach. Fewer teachers in schools with coaches report being regularly observed. Coaches reported spending slightly less time coaching.

Data systems in cohort 2 appeared to be better established for benchmark than for progress-monitoring assessments; not all teachers have assumed responsibility for administering progress-monitoring assessments. Data were used by the majority of staff members for a variety of tasks; however, they were used habitually by coaches, less often by teachers, and less, still, by principals.

All cohort 1 schools administered the DIBELS three times a year, and, according to coaches, progress-monitoring was more regular this year compared to last. The use of data for some purposes by principals and teachers declined from last spring.

Most cohort 2 principals, coaches, and teachers regularly attended Reading Leadership Team and grade-level meetings. Teachers' perceptions of collaboration, and their trust of colleagues, were mixed. While two cohort 1 schools discontinued Reading Leadership Teams, schools that do have them meet monthly. Attendance at grade-level meetings appears regular.

Reading First Instruction and Interventions

All of the cohort 2 schools selected and used a research-based core reading program. Most school staff members were satisfied with their core program and understood Montana Reading First's expectations for fidelity and use of approved modifications including lesson maps and templates. There was a slight decline in the percentage of cohort 1 schools reporting use of the previous year's core curriculum.

In cohort 2 schools, the majority of the reading blocks were of appropriate length and were uninterrupted. Nearly all of the observed instruction in visited cohort 2 schools focused on the five components of reading. A variety of strategies and techniques were observed in the instruction of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension. Vocabulary lessons were infrequently observed. Almost all of the observed lessons were clear; the vast majority appropriately included modeling, guided questions, and opportunities to practice meaningful skills. Cohort 2 teachers, in the majority of classrooms, monitored student understanding, adjusted the lesson, and provided feedback. Student engagement was strong in half of the observed classrooms.

The use of walk-to-read, paraprofessional support, and small groups allowed cohort 2 teachers to differentiate during the reading block. While one in five teachers reported not having access to paraprofessional support, an inability to use small groups, and not differentiating during the reading block, interview data did provide some evidence of differentiation occurring outside of the reading block during universal access time.

About half of all cohort 2 students were provided interventions; an increased percentage of coaches indicated their school

was serving *all* of their struggling readers in interventions. On average, interventions were delivered to groups of five students, most frequently by paraprofessionals and teachers. While interventions materials met the needs of all students according to coaches, a smaller proportion of teachers agreed. The staffing and training of intervention providers continued to present challenges in schools.

About 60 percent of cohort 1 students were provided interventions. Coaches and teachers continued to remain positive about the number of students served and the training of intervention providers, although coaches perceptions declined slightly from last year.

Student Outcomes

By spring 2008, the majority of Montana Reading First students were at benchmark, including 80 percent of kindergarten students, 74 percent of first-grade students, 64 percent of second-grade students, and 60 percent of third-grade students. These percentages represented statistically significant gains from fall 2007 at all grade levels. These trends are true in both cohorts.

Since spring 2004, trends indicate that increased percentages of Montana Reading First students met benchmark and decreased percentages of students had intensive instructional support recommendations, at almost every grade level. Furthermore, for an intact group of students who began kindergarten in 2005 and finished third grade in 2008, larger proportions of children achieved benchmark each year than children in the same grades in spring 2004. Overall, Montana Reading First was found to be effective for 73 percent of these students.

Montana Reading First was most successful in closing the achievement gap between white and American Indian students. It reduced that gap at all grade levels, except second, and virtually closed it in cohort 2. However, while the percentage of special education students at the intensive level declined from fall to spring in every grade, it grew larger from kindergarten to third grade, such that, by spring 2008, slightly more than half of students eligible for special education were still at the intensive level.

Sustainability

Cohort 1 schools continued to sustain many required components of the program, including assessments, grade-level meetings, and interventions. Several components—the 90-minute reading block, the core program, and Reading Leadership Team (RLT) meetings—were implemented with slightly less fidelity in Year 5. Since spring 2006, the frequency of coaching, professional development for teachers, and teachers' use of data declined.

Based on the experiences of cohort 1 and other evaluation data, it appears that cohort 2 will face some challenges in sustaining Reading First. Cohort 2 district coordinators, principals and teachers reported less support for the continuation of Reading First, compared to those in cohort 1. Additionally, compared to cohort 1, fewer schools may have coach support in 2008–2009. These differences may overcome the strengths that cohort 2 brings to continuation. These strengths most notably include state, district, principal, and coach support; low staff member turnover; established systems and habits; and demonstrated student success.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Reading First

Reading First is a federal initiative authorized by Title I, Part B, Subpart 1 of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. Often characterized as "the means by which the goals of NCLB are to be achieved," Reading First provides an unprecedented amount of funding and focused support for the improvement of K–3 reading instruction, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that all children read at grade level by the end of third grade. In support of this goal, Reading First funds states to support comprehensive programs to improve reading instruction at selected Reading First schools, as well as more broadly in the state.

Most funds that states received under Reading First were distributed to selected Reading First districts and schools, which were eligible for the grant based on state-determined criteria (generally a combination of poverty level and history of low reading performance). While states varied in their plans to implement Reading First, most states' plans included many of the following expectations of grantee schools:

- Selection and implementation of core reading program materials from a list of approved research-based materials or evidence that core reading program materials have been selected on the basis of a rigorous evaluation process
- Hiring of a full-time reading coach to provide mentoring, coaching, training, and demonstration lessons
- Attendance of principals, reading coaches, and district-level coordinators at regular state-provided professional development and of all K–3 staff members at research-based professional development offerings, such as a summer institute
- Creation of a Reading Leadership Team to guide the design and implementation of the grant
- Use of approved assessments that are valid and reliable, analyses of data, and use of results to make reading improvement decisions
- Identification of students in need of intensive reading interventions and provision of appropriate, targeted interventions in a small-group setting using research-based reading interventions selected from a list of approved research-based materials
- Agreement to visits from independent evaluators, as well as state and federal Reading First administrators, and use of their feedback

Montana Reading First

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) was awarded a six-year federal Reading First state grant in July 2003. In January 2004, 17 schools began in cohort 1; in June 2004, three additional schools were added. Spring 2006 marked the end of the three-year grant cycle for these schools. In 2007–2008, these schools continued to receive small continuation grants, invitations to professional development, site visits and technical assistance from the state.

A second cohort of schools applied for a three-year grant beginning in fall 2005. Thirteen schools were awarded grants; this spring marked the end of their third year of implementation.

In 2007–2008, a total of 31 schools in 22 districts continued to participate in Montana Reading First. A total of 5,888 students received reading instruction under Reading First; the majority were enrolled in cohort 1 schools (65%). The participating schools and districts, as well as their K-3 student enrollment, are listed in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1
Montana Reading First Schools

District	School	Cohort	K-3 Enrollment*
Billings	Newman	Cohort 1	202
	Ponderosa	Cohort 1	261
Box Elder	Box Elder	Cohort 2	162
Butte	Kennedy	Cohort 1	178
	West Butte	Cohort 2	282
	Whittier	Cohort 1	241
Centerville	Centerville	Cohort 1	55
Charlo	Charlo	Cohort 1	107
Dixon	Dixon	Cohort 1	45
Dodson	Dodson	Cohort 2	18
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	Cohort 2	17
East Helena	Eastgate	Cohort 1	265
	Radley	Cohort 1	234
Evergreen	East Evergreen	Cohort 2	387
Frazer	Frazer	Cohort 2	43
Great Falls	Longfellow	Cohort 1	225
	Morningside	Cohort 2	199
	West	Cohort 1	311
Hardin	Crow Agency	Cohort 1	193
	Hardin Intermediate	Cohort 1	99
	Hardin Primary	Cohort 1	318
Harlem	Harlem	Cohort 2	172
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	Cohort 1	59
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	Cohort 2	57
Helena	Warren	Cohort 1	180
Libby	Libby	Cohort 1	378
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	Cohort 2	204
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	Cohort 1	254
	Pablo	Cohort 1	207
Somers	Lakeside	Cohort 2	259
Stevensville	Stevensville	Cohort 2	276

*Enrollment is based on DIBELS data collected from each school in spring 2008.

The External Evaluation

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) signed a contract in August 2004 to be the external evaluator for Montana Reading First. The approved evaluation incorporates and integrates both formative and summative evaluation components to examine the following broad areas:

- Effectiveness of the technical assistance provided to grant recipients
- Quality and level of implementation of statewide Reading First activities
- Impact of Reading First activities on desired student and teacher outcomes

These issues were addressed using a range of approaches and instruments, which are described in Chapter 2: Evaluation Methods.

Organization of the Report

The bulk of this report describes the implementation and outcomes of cohort 2 schools. Chapter 3 describes professional development and technical assistance from the state. Chapter 4 examines leadership roles, collaboration, and use of data in schools around the state. Chapter 5 moves to the school and classroom level, describing instruction and intervention. Chapter 6 examines student assessment outcome data, starting with a picture of project-level results, followed by details from cohorts 1 and 2. Chapter 7 looks at sustainability, both as experienced by cohort 1 schools and as projected for cohort 2.

The report concludes with a series of recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: EVALUATION METHODS

The evaluation of Montana Reading First collected data about both the implementation and the impact of the project. As in past years, the evaluation relied on information from a variety of instruments and respondents to capture the experience of a wide range of project participants.

The instruments used in the 2007–2008 evaluation included the following:

- **Cohort 2 Surveys**—surveys of all kindergarten through third-grade teachers, coaches, and principals from all Montana Reading First cohort 2 schools, as well as of the district coordinators in each district

- **Cohort 1 Surveys**—shortened surveys of all kindergarten through third-grade teachers, coaches, and principals from all Montana Reading First cohort 1 schools. District coordinators also completed the aforementioned district survey

- **Interview Protocols**—in-person, open-ended interviews with the principal, coach, and two teachers at six randomly selected[1] cohort 2 schools, as well as a telephone interview with the state Reading First director

- **Classroom Observation Protocol**—reading block observations of three, kindergarten through third-grade classrooms at the same six cohort 2 schools

- **Student Assessments**—kindergarten through third-grade students' assessment scores on the DIBELS.

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[1] In 2005–2006, six cohort 2 schools were randomly selected to receive site visits in spring 2006, one school was selected as an alternate; the remaining schools were scheduled for site visits in spring 2008.

- **Ongoing review of project documents**

The instruments used this year were very similar to those used in the previous year's evaluation; a large proportion of survey and interview items were retained in order to permit an analysis of change over time. They were, however, further refined in order to:

- Identify redundancies and gaps in existing evaluation instruments
- Gather information about new program areas that deserved attention
- Address all topic areas and encompass the viewpoints of multiple stakeholders while minimizing data collection burdens on school and project staff members

This chapter further describes each of these instruments, includes the response rates obtained, and any limitations or cautions about the data collected. Copies of all instruments are included in the Appendices.

Cohort 2 Surveys

In spring 2008, surveys were administered to school and district staff members involved in Reading First. The surveys were designed to gather information on district, school, and classroom practices; perceptions of Reading First; and its impact during the 2007–2008 year of implementation. They contained close-ended questions about areas related to grant implementation, including: professional development and technical assistance; state and district support to Reading First schools; assessments and use of data; leadership; meetings and collaboration; roles and responsibilities; use of the core program, instruction, and student grouping; interventions; beliefs and attitudes about Reading First; and sustainability. These surveys included:

- Principal survey (68 items)
- Reading coach survey (98 items)
- Teacher survey for staff members who taught kindergarten through third-grade reading during the past year (not including aides or student teachers) (107 items)
- District survey for district Reading First liaisons/coordinators (23 items)

Coach, principal, and teacher surveys were mailed to the reading coach at each school with explicit instructions for administration. Coaches were encouraged to set aside time for survey completion at a staff meeting or other already-reserved time. Survey instructions encouraged respondents to be candid in their answers and assured respondents' anonymity; cover sheets for each survey further explained the purpose of the survey and intended use of the data. To further encourage honest responses, respondents received confidentiality envelopes in which to seal their surveys before turning them in. Completed surveys were collected by the reading coaches, who were asked to mail them back to the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL). NWREL received coach, principal, and teacher surveys from all 12 of the cohort 2 schools—a 100 percent response rate[2].

A survey for district coordinators was administered online. It addressed district participation and support for Reading First, several aspects of professional development, state support for Reading First, and sustainability. Coordinators received e-mail information about these surveys and passwords for the protected site. Surveys were received from seven cohort 2 districts. Survey responses in this report are rounded to the nearest whole number. In some tables and figures, totals do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

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[2] Data suggest that 100 percent of cohort 2 teachers completed surveys.

Cohort 1 Surveys

Kindergarten through third-grade reading teachers, coaches, and principals in cohort 1 schools, which received less funding and fewer resources from the state in 2007–2008, completed shortened surveys. These surveys focused on implementation items that would measure change in key areas of program implementation, such as the reading block, use of assessments, attitudes towards the grant, and leadership. The surveys included:

- Principal survey (26 or 45 items, depending on whether a reading coach was employed in the building)
- Reading coach survey (36 items)
- Teacher survey for staff members who taught K–3 reading during the past year (not including aides or student teachers) (32 items)

Cohort 1 district coordinators also completed the same online survey as those in cohort 2.

Surveys were received from 18 of 19 schools including 18 principals, 16 coaches, and 187 out of approximately 221 teachers (85%)[3]. Five cohort 1 district coordinators completed the online survey.

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[3] In schools were there was no coach, principals were asked to complete a second section of their survey, which duplicated items from the coach survey. When surveys were returned, many principals completed this second section, but NWREL also received completed coach surveys from these schools as well. In some instances, items were not completed identically. NWREL used the survey from the coach when this occurred. Also, one school completed and returned two coach surveys. Some items were not completed identically. In these cases, the data were entered as missing. One school was mailed surveys, but the coach did not receive them.

Interview Protocols

Interviews were conducted with six reading coaches and principals and 12 teachers from six of the cohort 2 Reading First schools. Interviews with the principal and reading coach covered a similar range of topics: the roles of each, the type and perceived effectiveness of professional development, support from the state, perceptions of instructional change at the school, use of assessments, changes in communication and collaboration, as well as challenges and successes of the past year. Interviews generally lasted between 30 to 60 minutes, with the coach interview being somewhat longer than the principal interview.

Interviews with the teachers covered aspects of curriculum fidelity, professional development and their experience working with the reading coach, their school's intervention program, and grade-level meetings.

The telephone interview with the state Reading First director covered varied aspects of Reading First, including state and district support to Reading First schools, professional development and technical assistance, leadership and meetings, assessments and use of data, roles and responsibilities, instruction and interventions, and sustainability.

Interviews were not taped; instead, extensive notes were recorded and then summarized. Consequently, the quotes provided in this report are not always verbatim, but do represent, as closely as possible, the actual wording of the respondents. Interviewees were assured confidentiality, meaning that their individual or school name would not be attached to their responses.

Interview questions were deliberately open-ended. This provided a good balance to the surveys, which predefined the issues for respondents and asked them to express what

might be complex opinions by checking one of four or five choices. The interviews, in contrast, allowed respondents to answer by talking about the issues or concerns most relevant to them. Qualitative analyses focused on patterns found among respondents, rather than exact counts, because the open-ended nature of the questions allowed a range of different responses.

Classroom Observation Protocol

In most Reading First schools, reading instruction occurs throughout the primary grades during a single 90-minute block of time during the school day; in a few schools, a K-1 reading block might be followed by a separate block for grades 2-3. This means that in most schools, evaluators only had a total of 90 minutes in which to observe as much reading instruction as possible. For this reason, evaluators visited portions of three classes, at different grade levels, for 20 minutes each, well aware that this information would provide only a "snapshot" of the instruction that occurred at the school.

Evaluators randomly selected three of the four grades to observe at each school, so approximately the same number of classes at each grade level would be observed across all the schools. Site visitors then randomly selected classrooms at those grades by telling coaches they would like to visit the classes of teachers whose name fell in a certain place in the alphabet. Coaches were informed that teachers had the right to request *not* to be observed, and that, in such circumstances, a different class could be substituted (such substitutions were very rare).

In total, site visitors conducted 18 classroom observations, spread fairly evenly across grades: kindergarten (33%), first grade (22%), second grade (27%), and third grade (17%). The average observation was 25 minutes in length.

During the observations, the evaluators focused on the work of the teacher and the response of the students. For example, if the teacher was working with a group of five students, and other students were working with a paraprofessional, or on their own or in groups, the observation focused on the small-group work of the teacher. Paraprofessionals and other adults were not explicitly observed, although their presence in the classroom was noted.

Evaluators took detailed notes in consecutive five-minute blocks, recording chronologically what the teacher did and how students responded. After the observation, evaluators used their notes to record what was being taught in each five-minute block during the observation (phonics, vocabulary, etc.), and then used a rubric to rate certain characteristics of the lesson, such as its clarity, the provision of opportunities to practice, the level of student engagement, and the level of appropriate monitoring and feedback.

Student Assessments

Student progress in reading across the 31 Montana Reading First schools was monitored with the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills,* or DIBELS. DIBELS measures the progress of student reading development from kindergarten through third grade in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency.

The 'benchmark' assessment is administered three times a year: fall, winter, and spring. It includes five measures—Initial Sound Fluency, Letter Naming Fluency, Nonsense Word Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, and Oral Reading Fluency—for which benchmark levels have been established. Two additional measures—Retell Fluency and Word Use Fluency—are available, although there are no benchmarks for these measures. In accordance with DIBELS administration guidelines, not all measures are administered to all students at each testing period; instead, only those measures are administered that apply to skills students should be mastering at a particular period. Table 2-1 indicates which measure is administered to each grade level at each assessment period.

Collection and Analysis of DIBELS Data

Administration of the DIBELS assessment took place at the individual Reading First schools three times during fall, winter, and spring assessment windows set by state project staff members. The benchmark assessments were administered by school or district assessment teams.

Table 2-1

Scheduled Administration of DIBELS Assessment Measures

Measure	Fall	Winter	Spring
Initial Sound Fluency	K	K	--
Letter Naming Fluency	K, 1	K	K
Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	1	K, 1	K, 1
Nonsense Word Fluency	1	K, 1	K, 1
Oral Reading Fluency	2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3
Retell Fluency	2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3
Word Use Fluency	K, 1, 2, 3	K, 1, 2, 3	K, 1, 2, 3

After results were collected, DIBELS scores were entered into the online AIMSweb database. Data were downloaded by AIMSweb staff members and sent to NWREL in June 2008. ***The analyses in this report include only matched students, or those who had both fall 2007 and spring 2008 results.***

Calculation of DIBELS instructional recommendations. A student's raw score from each DIBELS measure places them in one of three categories: "at risk/deficit," "some risk/emerging," or "low risk/established." When multiple measures are administered, these categories are further rolled up by grade level and testing window to produce an *overall* instructional support recommendation (ISR) for each student: "intensive," "strategic," or "benchmark." These categories are defined by the assessment developers, based on the analyses of tens of thousands of student assessments. NWREL followed the guidelines of the DIBELS developers in order to combine scores and determine overall ISRs.

Calculation of the statistical significance of changes in student assessment scores. The Pearson chi-square test was used to determine whether the change in percentage of students at benchmark changed significantly from last year to this year. McNemar's test (which is based on the chi-square distribution, but accounts for data that are matched from one point in time to the next) was used to determine the statistical significance of changes among matched students from fall to spring of the current school year.

CHAPTER THREE:
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A primary component of Reading First is the provision of professional development that ensures school staff members have the necessary skills to implement the program effectively. In Montana, Reading First school staff members, at all levels, have access to professional development.

This chapter reports on the participation in, and reception of, Reading First professional development provided to cohort 2 principals, coaches, and teachers. It also reviews feedback on technical assistance provided by state project staff members.

The evaluation found that principals and coaches attended the majority of their meetings, and continued to find them of high quality and relevance, while providing time to network with colleagues. While an increasing proportion of coaches agreed that this year's training met their specific needs, by preparing them for observing and providing feedback to teachers and providing them with tools for working with resistant staff, a declining proportion of principals did. Like principals, teachers had a positive, but declining, view of their professional development. Principals, coaches, and teachers continued to voice concern with differentiation at their trainings.

Teachers continued to receive support from their coach in a variety of areas, but the percentage of teachers who found this assistance helpful decreased slightly. An increased proportion of teachers reported that they were frequently observed by their coach, but not all teachers were.

Study groups on *Overcoming Dyslexia* were appreciated; but the use of *Knowledge Box*, and its perceived importance, declined.

Additional training was requested by principals and coaches in the area of working with resistance; coaches and teachers requested more training in differentiated instruction. Principals also requested more time to reflect and problem solve with their peers, coaches additionally requested training on intervention programs, and teachers identified student engagement and comprehension as possible areas of focus in 2008–2009.

Montana Reading First schools were visited at least three times by their state reading specialists, who provided technical assistance, met with staff, conducted observations, and reviewed materials and data. School staff members found their state reading specialists to be supportive, trustworthy, and understanding.

Professional Development

In Montana, Reading First school staff members have access to state, district, and/or school-provided professional development. Principals and coaches were able to attend two-day meetings throughout the year. These meetings covered a variety of topics and included presentations from both state Reading First staff members and paid consultants. District Reading First coordinators were invited to participate in these meetings as well (see Chapter 4: Leadership and School-level Structures). Teachers participated in professional development primarily at the school and district level. This included their attendance at school and/or district workshops, training provided at grade-level and other meetings, and assistance provided by their coach.

Professional Development for Principals and Coaches

Most professional development for cohort 2 principals and coaches was delivered through two-day meetings held throughout the year. The attendance of the principal was expected for the first day, and that of the coach for both days. When the content was applicable, some teachers also attended these meetings. Coaches and principals were expected to return to their schools and provide teachers with the relevant information and/or training from the meetings.

The majority of coaches and principals attended four of the five two-day principal and coaches meetings during the school year. Both principals and coaches described their professional development meetings as being of high quality, being relevant to their work, and including adequate opportunities to reflect and share with colleagues. Some principal and coaches found the meetings to be adequately differentiated. An increasing percentage of coaches, but a declining percentage of principals, agreed that this year's training met their specific needs by preparing them for observing and providing feedback to teachers and by providing them with tools for working with resistant staff members.

During the 2007–2008 school year, five Reading First meetings for principals and coaches were held:

- September 24-25 in Billings. Reading First state project staff members presented on a variety of topics including data, coaching, and the year's study group book, *Overcoming Dyslexia*, by Sally Shaywitz.
- December 3-4 in Great Falls. Reading First state project staff members presented on a variety of topics

including differentiated instruction, groups, and interventions.

- January 7-8 in Helena. Frances Bessellieu conducted a coaching training.
- February 25-26 in Helena. Kevin Feldman covered varied content on comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, background knowledge and concepts, and motivation.
- May 5-6 in Helena. Jill Jackson spoke on observations, interventions, and instruction.

The majority of the principals and coaches attended, or planned to attend, four of the five trainings; coaches' attendance was higher than principals'. About one-fifth of the cohort 2 coaches attended Frances Bessellieu's training.

In interviews, principals and coaches were enthusiastic about the meetings and the opportunities that they presented. One principal felt that "every single session I have gone to has been really good; I've not gone to one that I felt was not worth the time." In particular, both coaches and principals found that one of the most important parts of the meetings was the ability to meet other educators:

> *The networking is the best part of the meetings: getting out of the school and talking to other people in the same position as you; problem solving; even with different programs, we are doing the same stuff and the problem-solving interaction is really powerful; I learned a lot talking to other coaches. (Coach)*

In surveys, reactions to the principals' and coaches' meetings were generally positive. A majority of principals and coaches described the meetings as high quality, relevant to their work, and including adequate opportunities to reflect and share with colleagues. Only a quarter (25%) of principals and coaches

reported that the meetings were mostly review for them. However, respondents did convey that differentiation was an issue, and a minority of principals (42%) and coaches (25%) found the meetings to be adequately differentiated (Table 3-1).

Table 3-1
Perceptions of Coaches' and Principals' Meetings

Professional development at the coach and principal meetings…	Percent Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	
	Principals	Coaches
Was very relevant to my work.	75	100
Consisted of high-quality presentations.	84	100
Included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with colleagues.	75	75
Was differentiated to meet the needs of different groups.	25	42
Was mostly review for me.	25	25

Although most of the responses were similar between 2006–2007 and 2007–2008, there were a few notable differences. These were:

- Principals were less positive in 2007–2008 about their professional development, as reflected by decreases in perceived relevance of the training to their work and in adequacy of differentiation.

- Coaches' responses showed a slight increase in the perceived relevance of their professional development in 2007–2008 and the quality of presentations.

Principal training in instructional leadership. Under Reading First, principals are expected to play not only their traditional role of building manager, but also that of instructional leader. This is only possible when the principal has a solid understanding of the practical and theoretical underpinnings of Reading First. They must know what effective reading instruction looks like, what struggling students need, and how to ensure that teachers provide appropriate instruction.

With this knowledge, principals can provide meaningful feedback to teachers and are able to make informed decisions about the allocation of resources and the provision of targeted professional development to staff members. Consequently, the successful implementation of Reading First depends upon the professional development of the principals.

Principals agreed the professional development they received in instructional leadership was of high quality; however, overall they were less pleased than in previous years with the training they received in this area. Compared to last year, a smaller proportion of principals agreed that the training:

- Met their specific needs as a Reading First principal

- Prepared them for observing and providing feedback to teachers

- Provided them with tools for working with resistant staff members

Furthermore, while fewer principals were pleased with the amount of training they received, this year was the first year that some reported that there was too much.

These trends are illustrated in Figure 3-1.

Figure 3-1
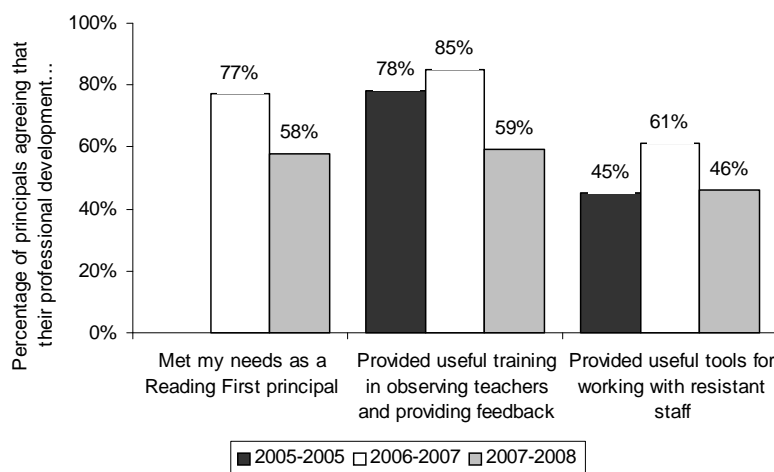
Principals' Perceptions of their Professional Development

However, in interviews, when asked about how well their professional development as a whole met their needs, principals were positive. The majority felt that their overall training had met their needs. One principal enthusiastically explained:

> *For me as a principal this has been the best year for training; the combination of trainings from this year and previous years has increased my skills in evaluation, communication, and coaching. (Principal)*

Another principal explained that the meetings allowed him to "focus on what I'm supposed to focus on, without distractions."

Yet, despite positive responses to questions about the quality of the meetings, principals noted that it was "hard to be out of the building" and that their absence was a "huge disruption to learning at school."

Coach training in coaching methods. While coaches take on many tasks in their schools (see Chapter 4: Leadership and School-level Structures), an important part of their job is the provision of on-going, targeted professional development to teachers. To do so effectively requires that coaches know not only what good reading instruction looks like, but how to work effectively with a wide range of teachers.

Survey data from 2007–2008 regarding coaches' perceptions of their professional development is largely unchanged from 2006–2007. Most were pleased with the quality (92%) and amount (84%) of coaching training they received this year, and only one coach (8%) felt that there was too little training.

However, coaches reported an increasingly positive view in how well their training prepared them for observing and providing feedback to teachers, as well as provided them with tools for working with resistant staff (Figure 3-2).

Figure 3-2
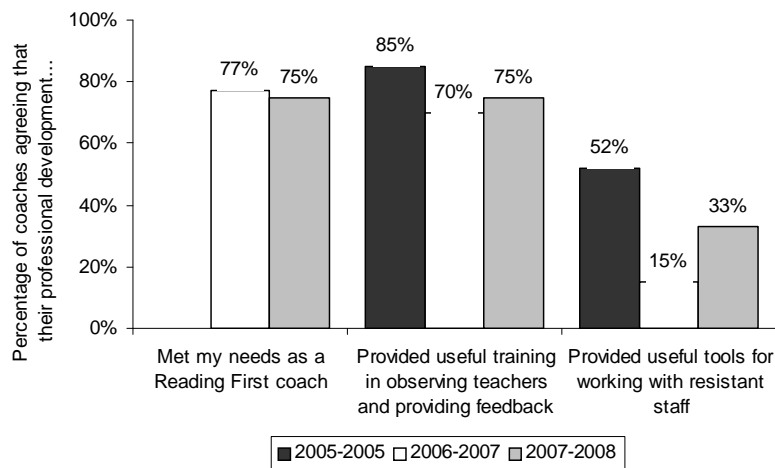
Coaches' Perceptions of Training in Coaching Methods

Interviewed coaches were positive about most trainings, but reported that Kevin Feldman's training in Helena was of great value to them. In particular, they appreciated his ideas on student engagement and vocabulary.

Professional Development for Teachers

Reading First professional development for teachers was offered during the summer 2007 and during the 2007–2008 school year. These opportunities provided teachers access to expertise in a variety of content areas. In schools, most professional development for teachers was provided by the reading coach. However, other training opportunities included training from state reading specialists, district reading staff members, and publisher representatives; peer observation and feedback; *Knowledge Box*; and study groups.

In 2007–2008, teachers had a positive, but declining, view of their professional development, compared to previous years. Teachers continued to receive support from their coach, but the percentage of teachers who found this assistance helpful decreased slightly. While an increased proportion of teachers reported that they were frequently observed by their coach, not all teachers were. Study groups were appreciated but the use of *Knowledge Box*, and its perceived importance, declined.

A majority of teachers reported that the professional development they received this year was "focused on the classroom," (72%) and "ongoing and intensive" (57%).

However, as can be seen in Figure 3-3, this percentage has waned from the previous year.

Figure 3-3
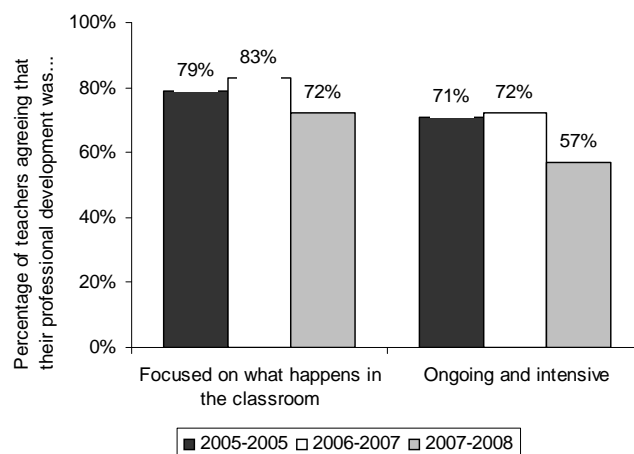
Teachers' Perceptions of their Professional Development

Summer training. This year, in order to ensure that school staff members received professional development in Reading First that addressed their individual needs, site-based professional development was provided at all cohort 2 Reading First schools during the summer. This training was often provided in conjunction with the state reading specialist and the reading coach, but sometimes it involved outside consultants and/or publishers. In addition to this local training, staff members could also attend the Montana Reading Institute. The Montana Reading Institute offered sessions on flexible groups and centers, templates, interventions, DIBELS, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary.

Most surveyed teachers (84%) reported that they attended some form of summer training. Interviewed teachers and coaches reported attending training that included templates, lesson plans, engagement, vocabulary, comprehension, sustainability, *Connections*, DIBELS/Aimsweb, LETRs, their core

curriculum, and time for grade-level teams to work together.

The majority of teachers (75%) agreed attending summer training was good use of their time, and most interviewed teachers found them very useful. One teacher noted that "there was nothing that was not useful; it was just so fast, only two days!" Other teachers commented on how they learned efficient techniques to reinforce skills and to plan. For example one teacher said:

> *The most useful to me was the training on using templates and knowing that you can use them at all grade levels. The speakers were wonderful and I felt like a sponge. This is a new approach for me, and it was very exciting. (Teacher)*

However, while the site-based training was supposed to provide more individualized training, reports from coaches and teachers indicated that this was not always achieved.

The segmentation and blending was too far advanced for the level I am teaching; the trainings were not differentiated for the grade level. These were great trainings with good information, but not relevant to my grade level. (Teacher)

Not very many teachers wanted the topics, but it was required for the new teachers. (Coach)

Professional development from coaches. Federal guidelines for Reading First require the use of coaches "who provide feedback as instructional strategies are put into practice" in state Reading First plans (U.S. Department of Education 2002). Coaches can provide support and on-going professional development to teachers by observing in classrooms and providing feedback, modeling lessons, and working with teachers to match instruction to students, based on assessment results.

Similar to last year, nearly all teachers received assistance from their coaches interpreting assessment results (97%), providing quality interventions (96%), monitoring the effectiveness of their interventions (94%) and administering and scoring assessments (91%). However, the percentage of teachers who found it "usually" or "always" helpful slightly decreased from last year (see Table 3-2).

It is unclear why teachers reported in surveys that they found their coach's assistance less helpful, while in interviews, teachers were clear that the assistance they received from their coach was helpful. Part of the explanation might be that teachers have gained the necessary skills to accomplish these tasks, and the help from their coach makes less of an impression now than it did when Reading First was first implemented.

Table 3-2
Teachers' Perceptions of Support from their Coach

Teacher received assistance from coach…	Percent of teachers* who found it usually or always helpful.		
	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Interpreting assessment results	88	87	81
Providing quality interventions	81	80	76
Monitoring effectiveness of interventions	79	68	61
Administering and scoring assessments	88	83	81

* Rated by only those respondents who received the support

Coach observations and feedback. The regular observation of teachers in their classroom during the reading block is a crucial aspect of coaching if coaches are to be aware of each teacher's instructional strengths and weaknesses. With this knowledge, they can individualize professional development to meet the needs of both teachers and the students in their classroom.

Most teachers (86%) reported that they were observed by their coaches at least monthly, and 41 percent reported that they were observed at least weekly (Figure 3-4).

While some teachers reported that they were observed more often than others, some coaches observed more than others; however, as can been seen from Table 3-3, there has been notable improvement since the previous year in the proportion of teachers who were regularly observed by their coaches. For example, this year, in three-quarters of the Montana Reading First schools, the coach observed almost all of the teachers regularly—up from 50 percent last year. In a contrasting group of schools, only some teachers (40 to 59%) reported they were observed regularly.

Figure 3-4

Frequency of Coach Observation and Feedback, Reported by Teachers
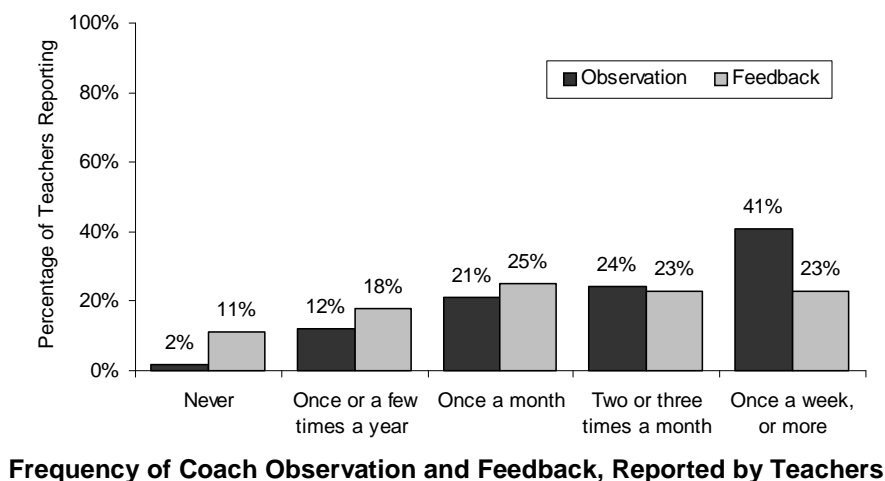
Table 3-3
Proportion of Teachers Regularly Observed

Proportion of teachers in school regularly* observed	Percent of Schools	
	2006-2007	2007-2008
All or almost all teachers (at least 80%)	50	75
Many teachers (60-79%)	36	8
Some teachers (40-59%)	0	17
Few or no teachers (less than 40%)	14	0

*Regularly defined as at least monthly

However, there were still one-quarter of schools where the coach did not observe at least 80 percent of the teachers regularly. What might explain these differences? Survey and interview data revealed two possible explanations:

- Coaches were uncomfortable observing.
- Coaches focused on other job responsibilities.

Coaches uncomfortable observing. Two-thirds (67%) of coaches agreed that they were comfortable observing teachers and providing feedback. Of the remainder, most were neutral (25%), and only one coach (8%) reported that she was not comfortable observing teachers and providing feedback. Although no coach said that resistance prevented them from entering classrooms, most (75%) coaches acknowledged in survey that "overcoming teacher resistance to Reading First has been a challenge," and nearly half of the coaches, in interviews, were clear that they did face resistance, especially from veteran teachers. One coach said:

> *We have had more problems with veteran teachers than new ones. The veterans are set in their ways. They will follow the program, but not to the extent it should be. (Coach)*

Another explained:

> *There are four veterans left who are very resistant to Reading First and are hard to change. I talk to the principal about resistance, but I can't follow up very aggressively. Some are soon to retire, so I focus my energy on the new teachers. (Coach)*

While it may well be the case that veteran teachers are more resistant and difficult to observe than new teachers, there were no significant differences in frequency of observations between them. In fact, veteran teachers (those with five or more years experience) were slightly more likely to be frequently (at least monthly) observed by their coach than new teachers (82% and 89%, respectably).

Coaches focused on other job responsibilities. Half of coaches reported in interviews that other job responsibilities prevented them from spending time in the classroom. These responsibilities included their own teaching responsibilities, substituting for absent teachers and paraeducators, and conducting assessments. The ways in which coaches used their time are described in detail in Chapter 4: Leadership and School-level Structures, but overall, there was no change in the percentage of time that coaches dedicated to coaching either one-on-one or in groups. One coach said:

> *A lot of my time is spent not coaching; if someone is absent and they pull me to cover until they get a sub, or they put a sub there who does not know how to teach reading and provide support so I still have to cover. (Coach)*

Another coach stated that assessments, particularly DIBELS, prevented her from observing teachers.

> *There are no observations during DIBELS, and it takes a month for the whole process— that's three months a year. It's a good use of my time, but it takes all of it. (Coach)*

The majority of teachers (73%) reported the frequency of classroom observation was "just right" (8% felt it was too frequent, and 19% not frequent enough), and teachers continued to feel that their coaches were a valuable resource and an important ally. This was especially true for those teachers who were frequently observed by their coach (Table 3-4).

Professional development from sources other than the coach. In addition to training from the coach, some Reading First teachers received training from the following sources:

- District reading staff members
- Publishers' representatives
- Peer observation and feedback
- *Knowledge Box*
- Study groups on *Overcoming Dyslexia*

Not all training opportunities were available at every Reading First school.

A third of schools (33%) received visits from **district reading staff members[4]**. Coaches unanimously felt these visits were helpful.

Publishers' representatives, training teachers in program materials was less common, and a minority of teachers (39%) reported that they had received such training. Most (70%) who received training found this training to be "usually" or "always" helpful.

Peer observation occurred only in a small number of classrooms; a third of teachers reported observing or being observed only once. A very small group of teachers (4%) participated in peer observation more than once over the course of the year.

Knowledge Box, a software-based learning system, was required for all Montana Reading First schools. It is intended to serve as a central vehicle for shared lesson planning and as a library of professional development video recordings. It delivers continually updated learning materials via the Internet directly to the classroom or computer lab.

Table 3-4
Teachers' Perceptions of Coaches, by Frequency of Observation

My Reading Coach…	Percent of Teachers Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	
	Frequently observed*	Infrequently observed*
Is a knowledgeable resource about reading research and practice	85	81
Is an ally, even when providing critical feedback	80	53
Has helped me become more reflective	73	24
Has increased my understanding of how children learn to read	67	29

*"Frequently" defined as at least monthly observations by the coach

[4] One-third of cohort 2 districts are small enough not to warrant a district coordinator position.

Frequent monthly use of *Knowledge Box* decreased in 2007–2008, as reported in surveys by principals, coaches, and teachers. These decreases were greatest among principals (29 percentage points), followed by coaches (21 points), and then teachers (11 points). These trends are illustrated in Figure 3-5.

The decreasing use of *Knowledge Box* was paralleled by a decline in its perceived importance, as reported by principals, coaches, and teachers (Figure 3-6).

Figure 3-5
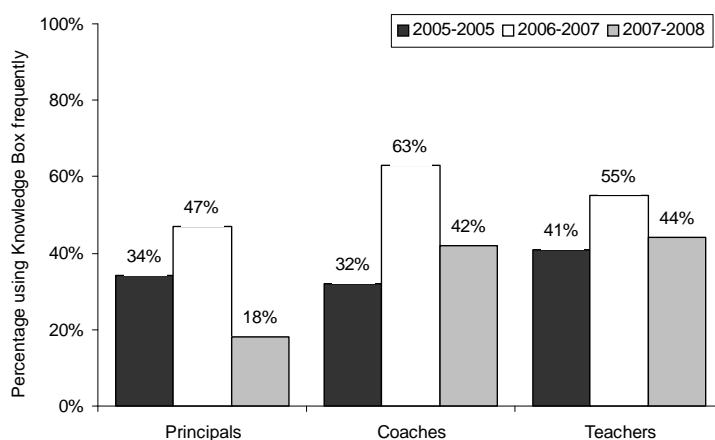
Frequent Use of *Knowledge Box*, 2005-2006 to 2007-2008

Note: Frequent is defined as monthly, or more often.

Figure 3-6
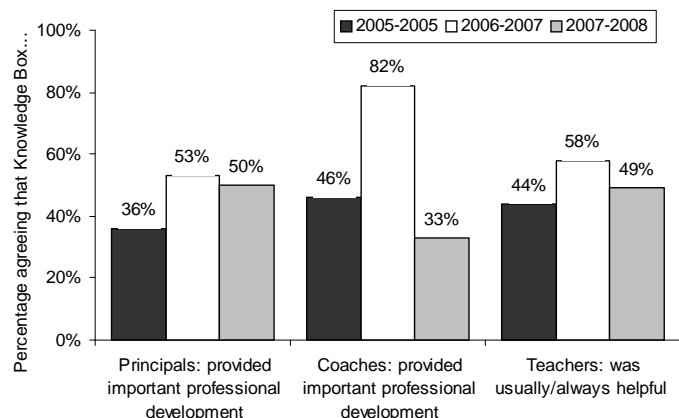
Perception of *Knowledge Box*, 2005-2006 to 2007-2008

The greatest decline in perceived usefulness was not among principals, who reported the least frequent use of *Knowledge Box*, but among coaches (49 percentage points). In interviews, all coaches acknowledged that *Knowledge Box* was useful, and they clarified a few of the reasons why Knowledge Box had been used by school staff less in 2007–2008 than in previous years. These included:

- Technical difficulties
- Lack of training
- Stress on other trainings and techniques

Study groups, a required Montana Reading First activity, examined the book *Overcoming Dyslexia.* At the September 2007 meeting, coaches received training, books for each of their teachers, and schedule for implementing the study group at their school.

A majority of teachers (70%) reported that they attended reading study groups at least monthly, and that these study groups were "usually" or "always" helpful (64%). A very small group of teachers (6%) reported never attending a study group. Almost all coaches (92%) agreed that *Overcoming Dyslexia* was an engaging topic for their school's reading study group. In interviews, most coaches were animated about their reading groups and *Overcoming Dyslexia.* Many felt that their teachers had learned quite a bit from the reading group, and that book studies were more useful than articles.

> Overcoming Dyslexia *has been really useful. Our first year, we read articles which were not as useful; but the teachers might not have been ready to do a full blown book the first year. (Coach)*

However, one coach noted that;

> *My team got bogged down in* Overcoming Dyslexia*—our district does not identify kids for dyslexia, and now we have to diagnose it.*

> *Where do we go from there? At the last group they decided to go back and make sure that we know what are best practices for all readers, not just those with dyslexia. (Coach)*

While all coaches agreed that attending reading study groups was a good use of time, fewer principals and teachers agreed (59%, each).

Future Professional Development Needs

To help gauge future professional development offerings, principals, coaches, and teachers were asked about areas in which they would like additional training.

Training Needs Identified by Principals

Interviewed principals' requests for professional development were varied and unique, and appeared more tied to the needs of individual schools or administrators than the state. Two suggestions however stood out, and reflected survey data:

- Strategies for coping with teacher resistance
- More time reflecting and problem solving with other principals

Principals needed more training working with resistant or non-compliant teachers. One principal stated; "the state could provide more support for working with non-compliant teachers. Some of the new ideas from Reading First are very difficult for them." Also, principals wanted more time at the state meetings to reflect and problem solve with other administrators.

> *For future years, it would be more valuable to have principals get together to discuss what worked and did not work, sharing concerns about schools, discussing walkthroughs, instead of sitting and listening to stuff for coaches, and never*

*having a chance to talk with other
administrators. We can use these
discussions as a springboard for problem
solving. (Principal)*

Training Needs Identified by Coaches

At least half of surveyed coaches requested
three areas of training:

- Differentiated instruction
- Intervention programs
- Working with resistance

Other areas, where one-third of coaches
requested training, were developing rapport
and buy-in with staff members, meeting
facilitation, providing constructive feedback,
student engagement, and training new staff
members.

Training Needs Identified by Teachers

The topic areas that at least one-third of
teachers identified as important for future
professional development were:

- Differentiated instruction
- Student engagement
- Comprehension

A smaller number asked for more training in
using supplemental (24%) and intervention
(31%) programs. While, overall, teachers'
confidence in using data for a variety of tasks
was lower than principals, a small percentage
of teachers requested additional training in
this area.

Technical Assistance

Montana Reading First project staff members
include a program director, four state reading
specialists, and a program assistant. The state
program director oversees the state reading
specialists, and, like the state reading

specialists, spends a good deal of time at the
sites monitoring Reading First implementation
and providing support. The state reading
specialists tailor their technical assistance to
each school based on its individual needs,
identified in their action plans. Following
their visits, they provide the program director
and school with written feedback. In 2007–
2008, state reading specialists also facilitated
many professional development sessions at
the coach and principal meetings, at the
schools, and at the Montana Reading Institute.

Reading First schools received at least three
technical assistance site visits from state
reading specialists. During such visits, the
state reading specialist usually met with the
coach and/or principal, reviewed the Reading
Improvement Plan/Action Plan, conducted
classroom observations, and reviewed
assessment data. Most principals and all
coaches reported the state reading specialists
to be very supportive, trustworthy, and
understanding.

Visits to Schools

In 2007–2008, all Reading First schools
reported that they received at least three
technical assistance site visits from state
reading specialists. Most schools (92%)
received more than four visits from their state
reading specialist, and two-thirds (67%) of
schools were visited more than five times.
Many coaches (82%) reported that the number
of visits was just right, and a small number
(18%) found the visits too few. All coaches
described the visits as helpful, and a majority
(58%) found them "very helpful." All or many
coaches reported in the survey that during a
typical visit, the state reading specialist:

- Meets with coach and/or principal
  (100%)
- Reviews reading Improvement
  Plan/Action Plan (100%)

- Participates in observations/ walkthroughs (92%)

- Reviews assessment data (92%)

- Shares materials (83%)

- Reviews documentation (75%)

- Meets individually with teachers (75%)

A smaller number of coaches also reported that the state reading specialist provided technical assistance (67%), completed the reading improvement plan checklist (67%), shared information from Reading First-related training and meetings (58%), and provided professional development to teaching staff members (50%). When interviewed, one coach described their school's visits by the state reading specialist.:

> *The state reading specialist has be very helpful; she is always available to bounce ideas off of; she comes and visits us with whatever materials or support we need—helping us with testing, data analysis, and setting up intervention groups (Coach)*

Surveyed and interviewed coaches, and many principals, found the state reading specialists to be very supportive, trustworthy, and understanding. (Table 3-5). Only one principal (9%) received conflicting messages

about Reading First from district and state Reading First staff members. During interviews, it was common for evaluators to hear accolades like:

> *Our state specialist has been great to work with. She is so professional, yet warm and personable. She has been very helpful in guiding us. (Coach)*

> *They are there all the time. We have never asked for, or requested, something where there had not been an immediate reply within minutes. (Principal)*

A few principals and coaches, however, had some concerns about teacher attitudes towards the state reading specialists. One coach noted that their state reading specialist has "worked hard to build positive relationships with the staff; however, the resistant teachers still consider her the 'Reading First Police.'"

Other coaches noted that teachers were afraid of potential criticism or judgment from the state reading specialist. Some of these indicated that increased visibility of their state reading specialist might improve teachers' perceptions.

Table 3-5
Principals' and Coaches' Perceptions of State Reading Specialists

	Percent Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	
	Principals	Coaches
The state reading specialists' support and input has been extremely valuable.	84	100
I trust our state reading specialist with any information—good or bad—about our reading program.	83	100
Our state reading specialist understands our school, our programs, and culture, and takes that into account when making recommendations.	84	100

CHAPTER FOUR: LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL-LEVEL STRUCTURES

Building an effective program requires strong leadership at a variety of levels. Montana Reading First expects district staff members, principals, and coaches to provide that leadership so that Reading First schools can implement and sustain strong reading programs.

This chapter examines the roles of these leaders and the required Reading First school structures that facilitate implementation on a daily basis.

The evaluation found that district coordinators reported strong support from the state in their implementation of Reading First. That support included clear expectations and communication, and appropriate responsiveness and input. Likewise, schools reported sufficient support from their districts.

Montana Reading First principals and coaches continued to fill the roles assigned to them. Principals conducted walkthroughs, but challenges remained in finding time to conduct them and provide feedback as regularly as they would have liked. Compared to last year, coaches were spending the same amount of time coaching, less time working with data, and more time on interventions.

Most principals, coaches, and teachers regularly attended Reading Leadership Team and grade-level meetings. Data systems appeared to better established for benchmark than for progress-monitoring assessments. Data were used by the majority of staff members for a variety of tasks; however, they were used habitually by coaches, less by teachers, and less still by principals. Teachers' perception of collaboration and their trust of colleagues were mixed.

School Districts in Reading First

According to the Reading Improvement Plan, districts must provide sufficient funding, monitoring, guidance, professional development, and staffing to Reading First schools, as well as make the success of students in K–3 reading a major part of elementary principal evaluations. Districts large enough to do so designate a coordinator to attend to these expectations. In order to keep district coordinators up to date with Reading First, they are invited to attend principal and coach trainings. Attendance at site visits by the state program director or reading specialists is not required, but is sometimes requested.

Many of the Reading First districts were small, rural locations. The majority had just one school participating in Reading First (83%); slightly fewer had a district coordinator (67%). Cohort 2 elementary schools in districts that had a district coordinator averaged 243 students in grades K-3; those schools without a district coordinator averaged 25 students in grades K-3.

District coordinators wore many hats, also serving as superintendents, curriculum directors/specialists, literacy directors/ specialists, and principals. In 2007–2008, they spent an average of just over one-quarter (28%) of their time on Reading First—about the same amount of time (25%) as was officially allotted to Reading First in their job description. This was about double the amount of time district coordinators spent on Reading First in the past year. The time actually spent on Reading First did, however, vary a great deal across districts, from 5 to 80 percent.

State Support of Districts

In surveys, district coordinators reported that state support for their district was very strong. This view was similar to their perceptions last year. All of the surveyed district coordinators agreed that:

- The state's expectations for Reading First were clear.
- The state did a good job of communicating necessary information regarding Reading First to district staff members.
- State Reading First project staff members were responsive to their district's needs.
- The state reading specialist's support and input was extremely valuable.

Explaining the value of state support, one coordinator said,

> *On-site visitations from the reading specialist on a regular basis are very helpful and provide a lot of support with struggling or resistant teachers. In turn, this provides support for the coach and principal with direction of program fidelity. (District Coordinator)*

District coordinators were more likely to attend meetings with the Reading First state reading specialist for their district than to attend state meetings for coaches, principals, or district representatives. District coordinators tended to find these former meetings more helpful than the latter.

District Support of Schools

Reading First district coordinators reported providing similar supports for their Reading First school. They always included:

- Assigning a district "go-to" person
- Providing a DIBELS assessment team
- Analyzing student reading assessment data
- Managing financial aspects of the grant
- Providing professional development aligned with Reading First

The majority of the districts also supported their Reading First school by:

- Providing technical assistance for Reading First
- Facilitating districtwide Reading First meetings for coaches and principals
- Modifying district requirements to be aligned with Reading First
- Providing additional funds to support Reading First

Many principals (82%) agreed their district provided sufficient support for Reading First, and few (9%) said messages about reading from their district conflicted with messages from Reading First staff members. Interviews supported this finding.

> *The district has been very supportive, from the Board to the superintendent. The Board chair has supported the program publicly—said he loves the program and that it's doing great things. The superintendent is the same way, encouraging us and looking at the data to see what our kids need. (Principal)*

A couple of principals mentioned they would like more funding support from districts. They realized, however, that districts may not have the resources to provide this.

Principals in Reading First

Reading First principals are expected to move beyond the role of building manager to become instructional leaders. In Montana Reading First, this means being actively involved in discussions and decisions about teaching and learning; being able to recognize effective (and ineffective) instruction; and leading staff members in data analysis. This is accomplished by conducting walkthroughs of K-3 reading classrooms; participating in Reading Leadership Team (RLT) and grade-level meetings; collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and using data; and supporting the reading coach.

Montana Reading First principals continued to fill the roles assigned to them. They conducted walkthroughs, but were challenged in finding time to conduct them as regularly as they would like and in providing feedback as frequently as they were conducted. Most principals regularly attended RLT and grade-level meetings. While use of data declined somewhat from last year, it was still a common practice of most principals. Coaches appreciated the work of their principals.

Most principals in Montana Reading First schools were mid-career. They had an average of nine years experience as principals, with a range of two to 18 years. While, none were brand new principals, one was new to their school. Most had been at their school a number of years; the average was five years, with a range of one to 13 years.

In interviews, principals described what the state expected from them as Reading First principals. Responses varied, but most principals mentioned what was expected by the state—their responsibility to conduct walkthroughs, attend a variety of meetings about Reading First, and collect and analyze data. One principal commented:

I'm expected to go to meetings, defend and protect reading time. Teachers see me in the classroom often, and I provide them with feedback. I also provide continued and ongoing systemic communication and data analysis.

Conducting Walkthroughs and Giving Feedback

Walkthroughs are brief classroom visits designed to monitor the implementation of Reading First during the reading block. During walkthroughs, principals observe teachers' instructional practices so that afterwards they can provide feedback aimed at improving instruction.

Principals are equipped to conduct walkthroughs, but are challenged finding time to conduct them and provide feedback afterwards. All surveyed principals agreed they were very comfortable observing teachers and providing constructive feedback. Furthermore, most interviewed principals said they used checklists during their observations in order to track what happened in the classroom and make suggestions for improvement.

All teachers reported their principal visited their classroom at least once during the year, either for a quick walkthrough or for a longer observation. The majority of teachers (74%) said the principal visited at least once a month; 22 percent said it occurred at least weekly (see Figure 4-1).

Like last year, fewer teachers reported receiving feedback than having their reading block observed. Just 34 percent of teachers reported their principal gave feedback at least once a month; 8 percent received it at least weekly.

Figure 4-1
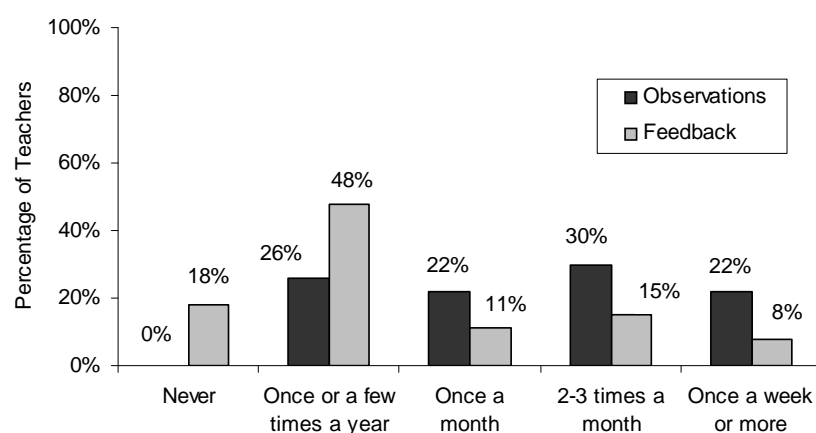
Teacher Reported Frequency of Principal Walkthroughs and Feedback

Regardless of the frequency of feedback, the majority of teachers (68%) said the feedback they received from their principal was "usually" or "always" helpful; one in seven teachers reported it was "never" or "rarely" helpful.

Challenges to providing this level of instructional leadership were noted in several areas, in particular buy-in, time, and teacher resistance. While many interviewed principals felt walkthroughs should be a high priority, none of the interviewed principals said the primary purpose of walkthroughs was to give instructional feedback (although one mentioned that the coach addressed instructional practice). Rather, the importance of walkthroughs was to improve morale and show support for Reading First:

> *For me, the priority for walkthroughs is very high. Principals should be in and out of classrooms all the time. Then the teachers are not intimidated, but comfortable. Walkthroughs are good for staff relations. (Principal)*

Furthermore, two-fifths of principals agreed that Reading First put excessive emphasis on the involvement of the principal in instructional matters.

When asked about challenges, several interviewed principals indicated they had difficulty finding the time to do walkthroughs. One principal commented:

> *The hardest thing is getting into classes everyday. There are a lot of things to do. They are not any more important than being in classroom; however, it is difficult to be in the classroom everyday. (Principal)*

Finally, several principals discussed their difficulties working with resistant teachers.

> *Attitude is the most challenging part of this — having to change teachers' attitudes. Not all teachers buy into the program, and if they don't, we don't have fidelity. I'm losing teachers who don't like the program. (Principal)*

Attending Meetings

The majority of principals attended school-level meetings related to Reading First, and found RLT and grade-level meetings a good use of their time. In terms of RLT meetings, the majority of principals (78%) said they always attended them, and the remainder said they did so often; this represented an increase from last year. In interviews, most principals

said RLT meetings were a good use of their time. One principal explained a strategy for making them more useful:

> *RLT meetings are absolutely a good use of time. In the meetings, we start with celebrations about the last two weeks—especially encouraging sign—then the complaining is gone. This sets the tone. We have an agenda, but we usually run out of time. Supportive teachers go back and report to all of the teachers at their grade level. (Principal)*

Overall, half of all teachers reported their principal "usually" or "always" attended grade-level meetings. However, attendance varied by school. In a third of schools, the majority of teachers (92%) said their principal "usually" or "always" attended these meetings; in a quarter, no teachers said the principal "usually" or "always" attended. A couple of the schools with low reports of principal's attendance were especially small schools.

In interviews, principals who attended grade-level meetings said they were a good use of their time. Several noted that these meetings improved morale in their school; for example:

> *Yes, grade-level meetings are a good use of principal time. I need to know about decisions that are made and changes in progress. Also, my presence will keep attitudes in check around issues that might come up. It's an important way to support the reading coach. (Principal)*

Most of the principals who did not attend said they would like to but did not have time.

Principal Trust

Research with measures of teacher trust of principals has shown trust to be highly correlated with student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Several findings related to principal trust in Montana Reading First were revealed and are worth noting. First, teachers who were observed by principals at least once a month had significantly higher levels of principal trust compared to those who were visited less than once a month (scale scores of 3.7 compared to 2.9). There was a similar pattern for principal feedback; teachers who were given feedback by principals at least once a month had higher levels of principal trust (4.2) compared to those who were given feedback less frequently (3.2). Finally, teachers who said their principal "usually" or "always" attended grade-level meetings had significantly higher levels of principal trust compared to those whose principal attended less frequently (scale scores of 3.2 compared to 2.9). These findings may be useful in encouraging principals to regularly observe and provide feedback to all K-3 teachers and attend grade-level meetings.

Using Data

Montana Reading First emphasizes that principals lead data analysis at their school. As shown in Table 4-1, principals reported high data use, but this data use declined slightly from last year. One exception to this trend was principals' use of data to look at schoolwide trends, which increased considerably.

For the most part, surveyed principals reported they were confident using data. More than 90 percent agreed they were confident in their ability to use data to:

- Identify professional development
- Lead teachers in discussions
- Understand student achievement trends across their school

Table 4-1
Principal Use of Data

The principal uses reading assessment data when…	Percent of Principals Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	
	2006-2007	2007-2008
Communicating with teachers about their students.	92	83
Communicating with teachers about their instruction.	69	58
Making decisions about student grouping.	85	73
Making decisions about matching students to the appropriate interventions.	85	82
Looking at schoolwide (K-3) trends.	77	92

Most (more than 80%) were also confident in their ability to use data to make staff assignments and identify teacher weaknesses. A few (17%) said they would like more training on identifying teacher strengths and weaknesses and understanding student achievement trends across their school. In interviews, coaches had mixed views of how effectively principals led their school in data use. Some coaches praised their principals.

> Data is posted in the building. Everyone knows it and owns it. The principal presents it to the district, parents, and public. (Coach)

However, other coaches said their principal was not at all involved in using data. In some cases, the coach or a specialist from the district led the school in data discussions.

Supporting Coaches

In interviews, almost all coaches said their principals provided support for Reading First and support for the role of the coach. All coaches who said they received this support found it very helpful. In a typical comment one coach said,

> I get great support from the principal. We communicate frequently; that's the key to what makes it work well. The principal values my opinion and makes that known to

the teachers. Originally, I took too much on in the reading coach position. The state specifically outlines the roles of principal and coach, which is very helpful. (Coach)

In addition, coach interviews mentioned all the state-designated roles of principals. These included comments from coaches indicating that principals attended meetings, used data to make decisions, and conducted walkthroughs.

Coaches in Reading First

A reading coach's role in a Reading First school is to support teachers, both in and out of the classroom. Coaches observe and model in the classroom; provide feedback to teachers; coordinate and ensure fidelity of the administration of assessments; schedule and monitor interventions; assist in progress-monitoring; provide professional development to teachers and paraprofessionals in group and individual settings; plan and facilitate meetings; organize and provide materials; serve as resources for school staff members; and with the principal, analyze, interpret, and use data to determine and support the needs of teachers and students. Data regarding how coaches provide professional development are reported in Chapter 3: Professional Development and Technical Assistance. This section describes the background and

expectations of coaches, as well as how coaches fulfill these expectations.

After three years of implementation, coaches' roles appeared to be better defined and understood. This year, the general distribution of coaches' work load was similar to last year, except that coaches spent more time on interventions and less time on data and assessments.

Most coaches in Montana Reading First (85%) were coaching full time, and one school had two reading coaches. Most coaches had three years of experience coaching and the same number of years experience coaching at their school. Years of coaching experience ranged from two to seven years. Coaches had many more years of experience as teachers at their current school—an average of seven years,

with a range of three to 20. In addition, 58 percent held master's degrees in reading or in another area of education.

Coaches' Work Load

In Montana, coaches and teachers understood that coaches work to support the implementation of the program and the engagement of teachers. Many coaches (74%) said their role was clearly defined (an increase from 58 percent last year) and most (84%) agreed that most teachers at their school understood their role (a 26 percentage point increase from last year).

Most coaches worked more than 40 hours per week; on average, they worked 48 hours (similar to last year). As shown in Table 4-2, coaches spent their time on a variety of tasks.

Table 4-2
Percent of Time Spent on Coaching Tasks

	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
One-on-one coaching (K-3)	12	21	19
Group coaching (K-3)	3	4	6
Coaching out-of-grade	5	6	5
Subtotal: Coaching	**20**	**31**	**30**
Administering/coordinating assessments	11	8	6
Managing data (entering, charting)	7	8	6
Using/interpreting data	7	8	6
Subtotal: Data & Assessment	**25**	**24**	**18**
Planning interventions	6	5	9
Providing interventions directly	10	13	13
Subtotal: Interventions	**17**	**18**	**22**
Planning for/attending meetings	11	8	9
Attending professional development	4	4	5
Paperwork	13	8	9
Unrelated (subbing, bus duty, etc.)	10	7	7
Subtotal: Other	**38**	**26**	**30**

Note: Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.

They were most frequently involved in one-on-one coaching and providing interventions. Compared to last year, this year coaches spent more time on interventions and less time on data and assessments. This later finding correlates with the state's goal to continue to move this aspect of Reading First into the hands of the principal and/or the RLT.

In interviews, coaches confirmed that they were spending time on the variety of activities shown in Table 4-2. Their perceptions of how their roles changed over the past year, however, had more to do with changes in their schools than with changes in state directives. For example, one coach had more new teachers in 2006–2007 and fewer in 2007–2008; as a result, she said she spent less time coaching teachers and more time leading professional development and working with students.

School Structures in Reading First

Principals and coaches are responsible for creating structures that reinforce and solidify the components of Reading First. RLT, grade-level meetings, and assessment systems are all structures that support staff members' discussions and use of reading research and materials, instructional practices, and use of assessment data. These structures also contribute to a collaborative culture in which teachers and principals share decision making. This section explores these structures and the extent to which collaborative cultures with shared decision-making have been established.

Positive perceptions of RLT and grade-level meetings increased over last year, with more principals and coaches reporting these meetings were a good use of their time. Data use in Reading First schools appeared to remain high. Teachers' perception of collaboration in schools and their trust of colleagues, however, were mixed.

Reading Leadership Teams

All Montana Reading First schools are required to have a RLT whose members represent the K–3 staff. The team is supposed to meet once a month and is responsible for providing leadership by making data-based recommendations and decisions regarding the program's goals and activities, including professional development, the school's reading programs, and interventions. The data suggest that this vision was met at most schools, which indicates improvement over last year.

- The majority of schools (92%, or 11 schools) had a functioning RLT which included the coach, principal, and representatives of each grade level in K-3.
- Most teams (six schools) met at least once a month; some (three schools) met every other month; and a couple met once or a few times a year.

Coaches reported the topics they typically discussed at RLT meetings. These topics were in-line with state goals for RLT meetings, and included:

- Schoolwide reading assessment data and scheduling (10 schools)
- Information from state Reading First meetings (nine schools)
- Student-level reading assessment data, grouping, and interventions (eight schools)
- Sustainability (eight schools)

Survey data also shows that RLT meetings were better appreciated by school staff members than they were last year. Most principals (73%) said that Reading First would not run smoothly without the RLT (compared to 46% last year). Half of the coaches shared this view (compared to 25% last year).

Figure 4-2
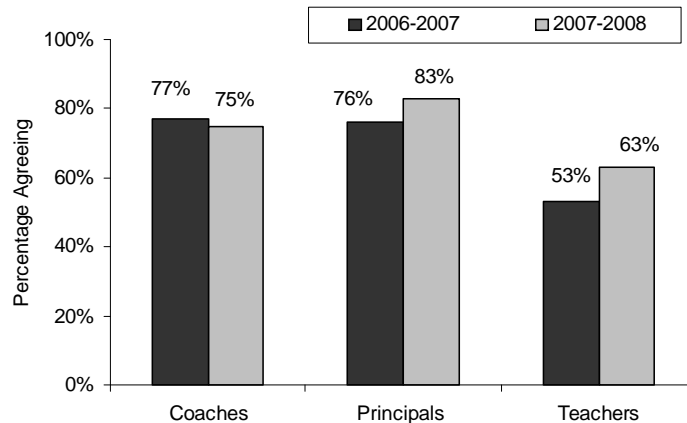
RLT Meetings Were a Good Use of Time

Similarly, as shown in Figure 4-2, most coaches and principals, and an increased percentage of teachers, reported that attending RLT meetings was a good use of their time.

Some coach interviews confirmed the survey findings, indicating RLT meetings were appreciated more this year than last.

> *We have a great team on the RLT. We meet bi-monthly at 7:30 AM; the agenda is set and the meetings are very productive. Teachers know what's coming up in the next forty-five minutes and they stick to the agenda. The principal sets the tone at the beginning with positive experiences and celebrations. We have a wonderful group, with even a parent, which has been a key to sustainability. (Coach)*

Several coaches, however, said in interviews that their school did not really have an RLT, per se. Instead, they said staff meetings in their small schools served the purpose of RLT meetings, so that all teachers could participate in decision making.

Grade-level meetings

Grade-level meetings are a time for teachers to collaborate on Reading First implementation. Teachers reported attending these meetings fairly frequently. Most (85%) said meetings occurred twice a month. An additional 12 percent said meetings occurred once a month.

As previously reported, half of the teachers reported their principal "usually" or "always" attended grade-level meetings. A higher percentage of teachers (80%) said their coach "usually" or "always" did.

Teachers reported they discussed a variety of topics during grade-level meetings. Topics discussed by the largest percentages of teachers included assessment data (85%) and interventions (72%). Two-thirds of teachers also reported discussing:

- Instructional strategies
- Grouping
- Problem-solving for individual students

Survey data also showed that appreciation for grade-level meetings increased from last year. As shown in Figure 4-3, larger percentages of coaches, principals, and teachers said these meetings were a good use of their time.

In interviews, virtually all teachers praised their grade-level team meetings. They said they were a time to talk about student needs and share strategies.

> *In grade-level meetings, we're able to determine what reading ability the kids are at, look at reading goals, and decide from there what would help them better reach their goals. That way we know what students are at upper and lower levels, and where kids need to move in groups. We also find out what other teachers are doing in their classrooms. (Teacher)*

> *We have a great bunch of teachers who have a good level of teaching experience in Reading First. We can pick their brains and add to our experience too. (Teacher)*

Assessment Data

In the Reading First model, the use of student assessment data is an integral part of a school's reading program. Staff members are expected to use data to drive instruction and make decisions. All schools were required to use the DIBELS assessment as a benchmark measure, three times a year (fall, winter, and spring).

In addition, schools use other instruments, including DIBELS progress-monitoring and core reading program assessments on a regular basis to monitor academic progress. State Reading First project staff members regularly model and discuss the analysis and use of data at coach and principal meetings and during visits by state reading specialists. Principals and coaches are expected to do the same at RLT and grade-level meetings at their schools. Organized systems for administering, analyzing, and sharing the results of these assessments were in place at all schools (100%), according to coaches.

Figure 4-3

Grade-Level Meetings Were a Good Use of Time
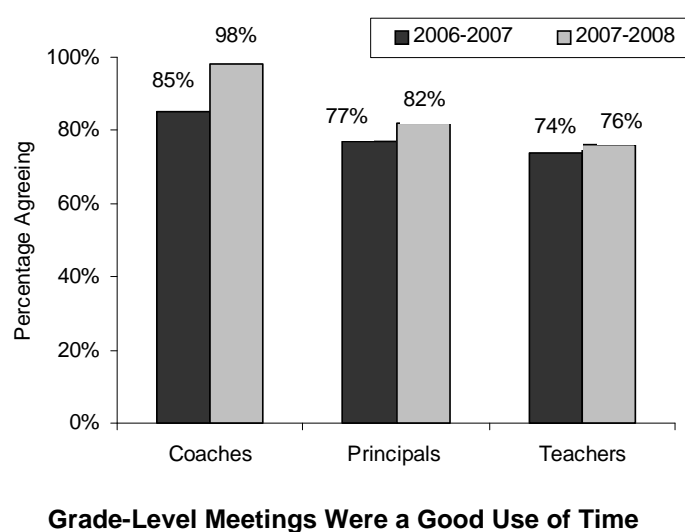
Benchmark assessments continued to be appropriately administered by assessment teams. Progress-monitoring of intensive and strategic students is occurring as frequently as expected, but the extent to which this task has been fully transitioned to teachers is questionable.

Benchmark assessment administration. Benchmark assessments were the responsibility of trained assessment teams; teachers could not administer benchmark assessments to their own students. As was the case last year, the reading coach administered benchmark assessments at all schools; at some schools, teams also included paraprofessionals and/or specialists.

All coaches said they were confident that all members of the benchmark assessment team thoroughly understood the administration and scoring of the DIBELS; this represented a 15 percentage point increase from last year. In interviews, coaches also confirmed there were no major problems with administration and scoring.

Progress-monitoring administration. Progress monitoring involves the administration of on-going assessments. School staff members use these assessments to make decisions about instruction, student grouping, and interventions.

By the end of 2006–2007, teachers were to assume responsibility for progress-monitoring their own students. In 2007–2008, coaches in almost all schools (92%) reported that K-3 teachers regularly administered progress-monitoring assessments; they were assisted by coaches in about half (58%) of these schools. Many teachers (79%) said they did all or most of the progress monitoring for their reading students. An additional 14 percent said they administered some. The majority of those administering these assessments (90%) agreed they were very confident in their ability to do so.

In Montana, progress monitoring of intensive students is expected to occur two to four times a month, strategic students should be progress-monitored less frequently (2-3 times a month), and low benchmark students should be monitored monthly. Monitoring for intensive and strategic students was carried out as expected. According to coaches, all schools monitored intensive students at least every two weeks, and strategic students at least every four weeks. Coaches reported that benchmark students (regardless of low or high status) were monitored less frequently. Some were monitored at least every four weeks (33%), but most were progress monitored less often (59%), and some never (8%). These reports were identical to those from last year.

Survey data showed that teachers appear to have the primary responsibility for administering progress-monitoring assessments, and that strategic and intensive students appear to be monitored frequently. However, in interviews, coaches uniformly said their schools did not have enough support for progress monitoring. For example:

> *I have turned it over to the teachers, and the teachers are not doing it. They ask their aides to do it. I think the teachers need to do the progress-monitoring testing—at least for half of their kids. (Coach)*

> *There is a huge push to make sure progress monitoring is done as it should be and done as frequently as necessary. It's hard for teachers to come up with the time. (Coach)*

Data Use

Montana Reading First emphasizes that principals lead data analysis at their schools. Teachers and coaches are expected to work with data frequently as well. Principal use of data was discussed previously in this chapter. Overall, principals' use of data, while still high in most areas, decreased from last year; the

majority of teachers and coaches continue to use data regularly for many tasks.

Most teachers (82%) reported they looked at data at least two to three times a month. This was, as were the areas where they used it, similar to last year:

- Identifying which students need interventions (92% of teachers "usually" or "always" used data to do so)
- Monitoring the progress of students in interventions (90% of teachers)
- Matching students to the appropriate interventions (88% of teachers)
- Grouping students into small instructional groups within their classrooms (88%)

The majority of teachers also said they used data to communicate with colleagues about reading instruction and student needs (81%), to look at schoolwide trends (75%), and to modify lessons from the core program (68%).

As might be expected by their frequent use of data, teachers' confidence in data use was very high. More than 90 percent agreed they were confident administering progress-monitoring assessments and using data to group students and plan small-group instruction. Many (83%) also reported confidence in their ability to diagnose a student's specific reading needs using reading-assessment data, although some (15%) said they wanted more professional development in this area. Fewer (71%) were confident in their ability to use data to understand student-achievement trends across their school.

Similar to teachers, coaches also used data frequently. All coaches said they used data when:

- Communicating with teachers about their students
- Identifying which students need interventions
- Matching struggling students to the correct interventions for their needs
- Monitoring student progress in interventions
- Looking at K-3 trends

The smallest percentage of coaches (50%) reported they used data when modifying lessons from the core program; however, this may be because they have been discouraged from modifying their core or are satisfied with their core and, therefore, rarely modify it. These findings about coaches' use of data are similar to findings last year.

Although most teachers and coaches use data frequently, coaches had mixed views about whether their school used data to its full potential. In interviews, coaches typically reported the need to improve data use, even when they said their school was using data fairly frequently.

> *Teachers are getting pieces of it; probably they missed some of it at meetings, but they are learning. (Coach)*

> *There's always room for improvement. (Coach)*

Collaborative Culture

In 2007–2008 teachers, coaches, and principals had mixed views of collaboration at their schools. Virtually all principals (92%) said their school had a collaborative culture (an increase from last year). However, percentages of coaches and teachers agreeing their school had a collaborative culture declined. About two-thirds of coaches (59%) and teachers (63%) said their school was collaborative. Perceptions varied by school.

Trust is one of the components needed for collaboration, and teacher reports showed that trust was also mixed in schools. As shown in Table 4-3, teachers' trust of coaches was generally higher than their trust of principals and other teachers. Analysis of survey data also shows that teachers who said their school had a collaborative culture were more likely to trust other teachers in their school (scale scores of 3.8 compared to 2.9[5]).

There was a similar pattern for coach and principal trust. Teachers who agreed their school had a collaborative culture had higher principal trust (3.8) compared to those who did not (3.0), and these same teachers also had higher coach trust (4.0) compared to those who did not (3.5).

Table 4-3
Teachers' Perceptions of School Staff Members

The principal…	Percent of Teachers Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing
Takes an interest in the professional development of teachers.	65
Makes clear to the staff his or her expectations for meeting instructional goals.	59
Carefully tracks student academic progress.	53
Communicates a clear vision for our school.	50
The coach…	
Is a knowledgeable resource about reading research and practices.	86
Is an ally in helping me improve my instruction, even when providing critical feedback.	77
Has helped me become more reflective about my teaching practice.	66
Has increased my understanding of how children learn to read.	62
Teachers at this school…	
Really care about each other.	66
Respect those colleagues who are experts at their craft.	64
Think it is o.k. to discuss feelings, worries, and frustrations with other teachers.	57
Respect other teachers who take the lead in school improvement efforts.	55
Trust each other.	55

[5] The principal trust scale was derived from four survey items in which teachers responded 1 as "strongly disagree," 2 as "disagree," 3 as "neither agree nor disagree," 4 as "agree," and 5 as "strongly agree."

CHAPTER FIVE: INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTIONS

The goal of Reading First is to have all children read at grade level by the end of third grade. To that end, all of the structures discussed in the previous chapters – professional development, leadership, and assessment systems – ultimately support what happens in the classroom. The following instructional components are expected in all Montana Reading First classrooms:

- Delivery of reading instruction in an **uninterrupted, 90-minute reading block**
- Use of a **core reading program** based on scientific research on reading
- Focus on the **five, essential components of reading**
- **Differentiated** instruction that meets the needs of the students

Furthermore, good instruction should always include:

- Clear lessons that scaffold instruction
- Monitoring and the provision of clear and meaningful feedback to students
- Strong and consistent classroom management and high student engagement

Finally, for students needing additional support:

- Data-based **interventions,** delivered outside of the reading block

Like last year, principals and coaches overwhelming believed that reading instruction had improved noticeably (100%); a smaller proportion of teachers (82%) agreed as well (this proportion was smaller compared to last year). However, in one-quarter of schools,

at least 30 percent of the teachers did not agree that reading instruction had improved noticeably.

This chapter describes the classroom-related aspects of Reading First, exploring the extent to which they impacted the delivery of instruction in Montana.

The evaluation found that the majority of the reading blocks (85%) were of appropriate length and were uninterrupted.

Most school staff members were satisfied with their core program and understood Montana Reading First's expectations for fidelity and use of approved modifications, including lesson maps and templates.

Nearly all of the observed instruction focused on the five components of reading. Instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics appeared to be appropriately targeted to students. A variety of strategies were observed in the development of fluency. Comprehension lessons for older students included the use of questions that relied on both recall and higher-order thinking skills. Vocabulary lessons were not frequently observed.

Furthermore, almost all of the observed lessons were clear; the vast majority included the use of appropriate modeling or guided questions and opportunities to practice meaningful skills. In the majority of classrooms, teachers monitored student understanding and adjusted the lesson and provided feedback. Student engagement was strong in half of the observed classrooms.

Limited differentiated instruction occurred regularly during the reading block. Teachers were better able to do so when they had

supports such as walk-to-read (WTR), paraprofessional help, and small groups. One in five teachers reported having no access to paraprofessional support and an inability to use small groups; almost all of these teachers indicated they did not differentiate during the reading block. Interview data did provide evidence of differentiation occurring outside of the reading block during universal access time.

Principals' and coaches' perceptions of their ability to meet the needs of American Indian students were more positive than those of teachers; staff members in schools with higher American Indian enrollments were more positive than those with no, or limited, American Indian enrollments.

About half of all cohort 2 students were provided interventions during the 2007–2008 school year. While this represents a decrease in the proportion served last year, two-thirds of coaches (representing an increase over last year) reported their school was serving all of their struggling readers in interventions.

Interventions materials were reported to meet the needs of all students by most coaches, but by a smaller proportion of teachers. The majority of interventions were delivered to groups of less than seven students, with an average group size of five students. Interventions were provided most frequently by paraprofessionals and teachers; however the staffing and training of intervention providers continued to present challenges in schools.

The 90-Minute Reading Block

In Montana Reading First, the delivery of reading instruction in first through third grade is expected to occur in a 90-minute, uninterrupted block. Kindergarten students in full-day programs should also receive 90 minutes of reading instruction; those in half-day programs should receive 60 minutes of reading instruction.

The majority of the reading blocks (85%) were of appropriate length and were uninterrupted. One full-day kindergarten reading block was shorter than expected. About half of the kindergarten reading blocks were interrupted, one school reported interrupted reading blocks in grades other than kindergarten.

All coaches reported that instruction to first-, second- and third-grade students occurred in reading blocks that were at least 90 minutes long. The majority of schools with full-day kindergartens offered 90 minutes of reading instruction (91%); half of the schools with half-day kindergarten programs offered 90-minute reading blocks; all offered at least a 60-minute block.

The data suggest that the reading block was, for the most part, uninterrupted. In first through third grades, almost all reading blocks were uninterrupted (100%, 92%, and 92% respectively). The majority of the kindergarten reading blocks were uninterrupted (33% of the half-day programs and 70% of the full-day programs).

Interruptions to the reading block were never observed during site visits. The majority of teachers (78%) reported never needing to use the reading block to work on non-reading instruction or tasks; most of the remaining teachers said they only did so once or a few times a year (15%).

The Core Reading Program and Its Use

Montana Reading First schools were required to adopt a core reading program for their school. Once adopted, the core informs the majority of instruction during the 90-minute reading block. State-approved materials and modifications can supplement the use of the core curriculum.

All schools used an approved core program, and, overall, the majority of school staff members were satisfied with it (Figure 5-1). However, compared to previous years, a smaller proportion of principals and coaches were satisfied; the proportion of teachers expressing satisfaction was similar to 2005–2006. In one-quarter of schools, half of the teachers were not satisfied with the core program.

Many interviewed teachers commented positively on their core programs, indicating that students were learning to read earlier and that reading instruction was consistent. Teachers who were less satisfied with the program felt it did not meet the visual or kinesthetic needs of all children, that pacing was sometimes problematic, and that some materials were not developmentally appropriate.

Use of Core Reading Program

Montana Reading First expects teachers to use the materials that constitute the core program. These—in conjunction with lesson maps, pacing guides, and templates—help teachers ensure the most pertinent pieces of the curriculum are addressed in the classroom, that their instruction is explicit and standardized, that they move forward in a timely manner, and that students are provided ample practice to build skills while being highly engaged.

Most coaches and teachers clearly understood these expectations. In the majority of the classrooms (78%) evaluators observed the presence and/or use of the teaching manual. In all of the classrooms where the manual was not observed, it was still clear to the evaluator that the core program was being used. In two classrooms, teachers included other activities not included in the core; in the first, the

Figure 5-1
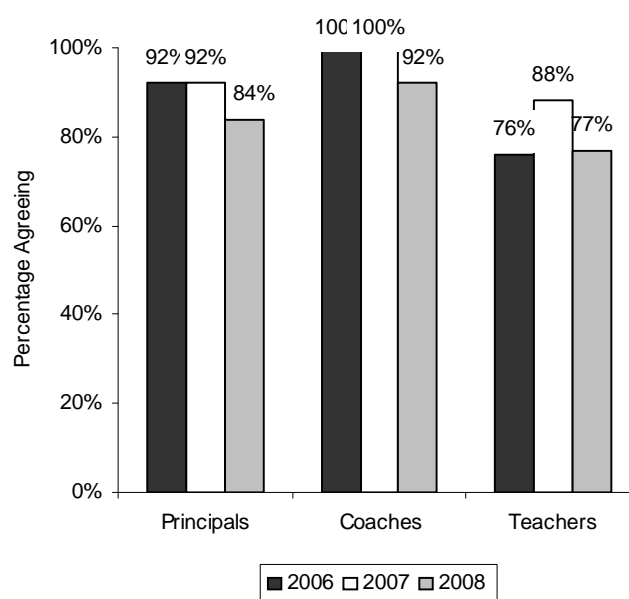
teacher used the words from the template lesson in a dictionary skill-building activity, and, in the second, the teacher implemented a readers' theater activity.

The use of templates was frequently observed; evaluators witnessed them in 61 percent of the observed classrooms.

In regard to fidelity to the program and modifications, schools were basically on the same page as the state. All of the interviewed teachers indicated they understood they were to follow the curriculum, deviating only to include lesson maps and templates as instructed. As reported by interviewed coaches, in most cases, few modifications were made to the core curriculum. Again, common modifications included the use of lesson maps and templates. Several coaches also mentioned strategies to increase student engagement or increased attention to fluency, comprehension, or writing. One coach commented:

> *Teachers follow lesson maps, which may finesse the core program. They do all the templates, but they may modify the order. (Coach)*

One coach reported that teachers made many modifications to the core to ensure the students received direct instruction; in this case *no* modifications were considered *inappropriate*. However, the majority of coaches noted a variety of inappropriate modifications that included: teachers implementing lessons unrelated to reading, such as art or math projects; not following the core script—omitting key pieces (partner reading) or adding objectives not there; and inappropriate monitoring, such as ignoring student mistakes or moving on when students had not mastered the materials.

Instruction in the Five Components

In its influential report, the National Reading Panel (2000) identified five essential components of reading instruction—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These five components have become the centerpiece of Reading First, providing focus to teacher professional development and a way for schools to think about the different types of knowledge and skills that students need in order to read successfully.

In spring 2008, evaluators visited six Montana Reading First schools. At each of these schools, they observed three randomly selected K-3 classrooms during the reading block. In total, 18 classrooms were observed; one-third of the observations were of kindergarten classrooms and the fewest were of third-grade classrooms (17%). As in previous years, evaluators spent between 20 and 30 minutes in each classroom. These observations helped to provide a picture of the delivery of reading instruction in the classroom.

Nearly all of the instruction in the observed classrooms focused on the five components of reading. Instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics appeared to be appropriately targeted to students (i.e., in the lower grades). A variety of strategies were used in the development of fluency. Comprehension and vocabulary were areas of focus at the state level; while comprehension was witnessed at all grade levels, vocabulary work was seldom observed by evaluators. Teachers most frequently assessed older students' comprehension by using recall questions and requiring them to use their higher-order thinking skills. Evaluators rarely observed instances of instruction characterized as "problematic."

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate individual sounds, or phonemes within words, as well as the recognition that altering phonemes changes the word. For example, the word 'cat' consists of the three sounds /k/ /a/ and /t/. Removing the phoneme /k/ and substituting /b/ in its place yields a new word, 'bat.'

According to the National Reading Panel, most students require no more than 20 hours of phonemic awareness instruction, usually in kindergarten or the beginning of first grade (2000). Phonemic awareness instruction was only observed in kindergarten and first-grade classrooms. The one first-grade classroom where phonemic awareness instruction was observed was a self-contained classroom with students of mixed instructional levels. When phonemic awareness was observed, it was briefly addressed.

Phonics

Phonics instruction aims to teach students about the relationship between the phonemes (sounds) they hear in words and the graphemes (letters) they see written on the page. Early phonics lessons beginning in kindergarten typically involve students learning about letter-sound correspondences. They quickly progress to reading simple, decodable text. As they advance, students learn there are multiple ways to represent some sounds and sometimes single sounds are represented by a combination of multiple letters.

About three-quarters of the observed lessons contained phonics instruction (72%). Phonics instruction was observed in every kindergarten and first-grade classroom; it was observed in fewer second- (40%) and third-grade (33%) classrooms. Kindergarten and first-grade teachers also devoted more classroom time to phonics instruction than did second- and third-grade teachers, for whom phonics instruction consisted of briefer activities.

Templates were most often seen during phonics instruction.

Fluency

Reading fluency refers to the ability to process text smoothly, without having to painstakingly decode each word encountered. Thus, fluency includes considerations of speed, accuracy, and phrasing (prosody). Fluency in reading is important because only as students come to read more fluently can they focus their attention on making meaning out of larger blocks of text.

Evaluators observed fluency work in about two-fifths of the visited classrooms (39%). It was observed most frequently in third grade, followed by first grade and kindergarten; fluency was observed less frequently in second-grade classrooms (20%). Fluency work included rereading familiar text; individual, partner, and choral reading; and the modeling of fluent reading. Teachers encouraged students to read fluently by clapping as students read and signaling for punctuation.

Vocabulary

The National Reading Panel (2000) noted that knowledge of vocabulary and sufficient background information to comprehend are essential to successful reading. While the direct instruction of particular vocabulary words is one way to help students increase their vocabularies, by itself this approach is not sufficient to support the learning of the many words students need to acquire. In addition, they need to learn to identify and interpret word parts to develop an ability to ascertain meaning from context and, as Beck (2002) pointed out, to create a heightened awareness of the words used in speech and writing all around them.

Several interviewed coaches reported that a Montana Reading First area of focus for the year was strengthening vocabulary. Instruction in vocabulary was observed in two second-grade classrooms. In both, the teachers spent time with the words and considered context clues, base words, and/or endings. Interviewed coaches also reported the increased use of "user-friendly definitions," "fast-map words," and "quick explanations that do not interfere with the story." One coach commented:

> *Teachers struggle with vocabulary (it shows in a lot of tests). Reading First drives them to look at data and see what the issues are. (Coach)*

Another coach admitted that some changes in these areas were planned, but had yet to be implemented.

Comprehension

The ultimate goal of all reading instruction is to enable students to better comprehend the meanings, explicit and implicit, embedded in a wide variety of texts. This means that students need to learn, among other things, to pay attention to, and think about, what they read; extract the main idea; identify important supporting details; and relate the text to their own personal experience and from other books.

Comprehension was another area of focus for Montana Reading First this year. Over half of the observed lessons (56%) had a comprehension focus. Comprehension was observed in all of the third-grade classrooms, in the majority of the second-grade classrooms (60%), in half of the first-grade classrooms, and in one-third of the kindergarten classrooms.

Asking recall questions and questions that required students to use higher-order thinking skills were the most common way for teachers

to assess comprehension (33% each). Recall questions were most frequently asked of third-grade students; older students were most often asked to use higher-order-thinking skills. Other observed comprehension techniques included retell questions, look-back citations, summarizing, and making connections. Many lessons (60%) incorporated multiple comprehension strategies, such as retell questions, those requiring higher-order-thinking skills, and predictions.

Differentiated Instruction and Grouping

Montana Reading First expects all students' instructional needs to be met. This occurs by differentiating instruction with a good balance between whole-group and small-group work. In Montana, a state with a high population of American Indian students, it means attending to their needs as well.

This section describes strategies for increasing differentiation, including using WTR (a practice where students leave their homeroom and walk to a classroom for reading instruction with other students at the same instructional level); paraprofessional support; and small groups in Montana Reading First classrooms. While the section focuses on the extent to which differentiation occurs during the reading block, it should be noted that the eleven core programs used in Montana Reading First approach differentiation in diverse ways. Some include small-group work during the block and others address individual needs during intervention or universal access time outside of the reading block. The section ends with a discussion of how well Reading First is meeting the needs of American Indian students.

Limited differentiation of instruction occurred during the reading block; in some cases it occurred outside the reading block during

periods such as "universal access time." Over one-half of surveyed teachers (57%) indicated that they were able to provide differentiated instruction at least weekly during the 90-minute block; two-thirds of these did so daily. As expected, the factors that contributed to their ability to differentiate included WTR, paraprofessional support, and use of small-group instruction.

As described below, these elements (or a combination thereof) occurred in many, but not all, classrooms (see Figure 5-2).

Figure 5-2
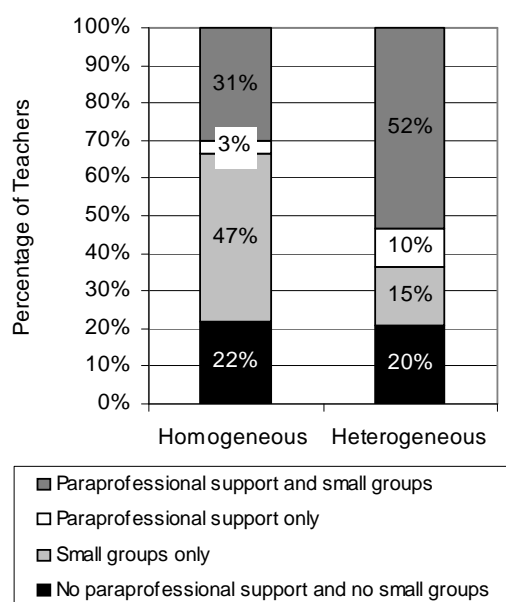
Supports for Differentiating Instruction, by Classroom Type

Walk to Read. The majority of the schools utilized WTR; 30 percent of schools used it for all or nearly all of their K-3 classes, and an additional 50 percent used it in some classes. Data collected from classroom observations were similar (35% of the observed classrooms used WTR). As a result, half of the teachers (52%) describing their classrooms as homogenous.

In corroboration of these data, half of the interviewed coaches reported that differentiation was occurring primarily as a result of WTR. For example:

> We do walk to read; we don't need to differentiate because all the kids are on the same playing field. (Coach)

Support from paraprofessionals. One-third of all teachers (36%) reported regular, daily paraprofessional support in their classroom during the reading block; the majority of these teachers were in heterogeneous classrooms. While half of all teachers (51%) never received paraprofessional support, the majority of these were in homogeneous classrooms.

Small-group instruction. Daily, small-group instruction during the reading block was provided by 47 percent of teachers. Another 11 percent used small groups at least weekly. In contrast, one-third of teachers did not (or rarely) use small-group instruction. This latter statistic might be partially explained by interview data. Some interviewed coaches said that differentiation through small group instruction was not part of their core program. In these cases, differentiation occurred outside the reading block time (e.g., during universal access time). For example one coach explained:

> We don't really do that [differentiated instruction] that much. It is done during universal access time. We don't have to do it because small enough groups are achieved for universal access; teachers have enough people to get small groups (we use aides/specialists to provide those small groups). (Coach)

One in five classroom teachers (21%) taught in classrooms without paraprofessional support *and* did not use small groups (the average class size of these homogenous classrooms was 15 students; that of the heterogeneous classrooms was 19 students). Almost all of these (96%) indicated they were unable to

regularly differentiate during the 90-minute block.

American Indian students. Over one-third of all Montana's Reading First students were Native American (35%). Overall, principals' and coaches' perceptions about school capacity to meet the needs of American Indian students were more positive than teachers'.

However, nearly across the board, staff members in schools with higher American Indian enrollments were more positive (see Table 5-1).

- The reading materials used were aligned to the needs of American Indian students
- Teachers were equipped to meet the needs of their American Indian students

Elements of Reading First that interviewed coaches and teachers felt contributed to American Indian students' success included interventions, flexible groups, fidelity of instruction, and consistency. On the other

Table 5-1
Staff Members' Perceptions of Reading First and American Indian Students

Survey Item	Percent of All Schools			Percent of Schools with at Least 20% American Indian Enrollment		
	Principals	Coaches	Teachers	Principals	Coaches	Teachers
Our Reading First program is doing an excellent job meeting the needs of our American Indian students	75	75	43	72	100	74
I believe that Reading First can close the achievement gap between American Indian and white students	75	67	38	86	72	57
Our school uses reading materials that are well-matched to the needs of our American Indian students in reading		67	34		72	48
Teachers at my school are equipped to meet the needs of our American Indian students in reading.		75			86	
I feel equipped to meet the needs of my American Indian students during reading instruction			52			83

The majority, at least two-thirds, of principals and coaches felt their Reading First program was doing an excellent job of meeting the needs of American Indian students; a smaller proportion of teachers (two-fifths) agreed. In schools where at least 20 percent of students were American Indian these percentages were higher. This pattern holds in other areas as well, including agreeing that:

- Reading First could close the achievement gap between American Indian and white students

hand, some interviewees expressed concern both with some components of the program (direct instruction, the 90-minute uninterrupted reading block, and a lack of cultural alignment) and any programs overall ability to find success with the population. The following quotes illustrate these findings:

> …there are language issues [at reservation schools] which should be served well by explicit instruction. Nevertheless, the cultural values are different and attendance is a

problem…teachers had to go to the homes to get kids to come to school. So, Reading First probably can't close the gap. (Coach)

Yes; how rigorous it makes them attend to what they are learning and gives them strategies to become better readers. On the flipside, we have a lot of problems with attendance, some miss 15-20 days a quarter; we have no control over that, and there is no response from the parents. The core is nice because they do represent a lot of cultures in the text, so students learn about other things. Direct instruction and quick responses with Native American students is often criticized, but I've had success with it; it's still worthwhile. (Teacher)

Other Essential Lesson Characteristics

Evaluators rated observed lessons on several characteristics that were selected based on research findings about good instruction and the ability to see them in a relatively short period of time (for more details,see Chapter 2: Evaluation Methods). Detailed notes from observations of the 18 reading classrooms during the six site visits, and a rubric, provide the data for this analysis. From this admittedly small sample, the findings include:

- Almost all of the lessons (94%) were rated as definitely clear, with accuracy, student understanding, and smooth flow.
- Over four-fifths of the teachers (88%) used appropriate and clear modeling or guiding questions.[6]
- In over three-quarters of the classrooms (81%) students were provided with

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[6] The use of modeling and guided questions was not observed in 41 percent of the classrooms; since the evaluator did not find this inappropriate, these classrooms are included in this percentage.

adequate and varied opportunities to practice meaningful skills.

- In two-thirds of the classrooms (65%) teachers regularly monitored most of the students, appropriately adjusted the lesson, *and* provided feedback.
- In half of the classrooms (53%) the majority of students were regularly participating most of the time, with little or no off-task behaviors.
- Four classrooms (22%) were observed with serious problems that interfered with student learning including limited classroom management and student engagement, lengthy transitions or directions, and materials being presented too slowly to the students.
- All of the kindergarten and first-grade classrooms were rated high on at least three of the five classroom characteristics; fewer second- and third-grade classrooms were.

Lesson Clarity

Almost all of the observed lessons (94%) were considered clear, easy to follow and with good flow; the information presented was accurate and there was apparent student understanding of the materials.

Scaffolded Instruction

Teachers can scaffold student learning by first modeling a task for them, then doing it with them, and then gradually withdrawing so that students learn how to do it themselves. Explicit modeling has been emphasized in many professional development workshops since the first year of Reading First implementation. Modeling is not expected to be seen in every classroom; site visits occur in the spring after students have already been taught routines. However, modeling is appropriate when new skills are introduced. This spring, explicit modeling occurred in

29 percent of observed lessons. It was most frequently observed in kindergarten.

Another way of scaffolding learning is using guiding questions to help students think their way through a task or a correct response. This practice was also observed in 18 percent of the classrooms visited, and at all grade levels.

The use of modeling or guiding questions was not observed in seven classrooms, spread across the four grades (41%).

Providing Practice

After a teacher has introduced a new skill, students need time to practice. They should be afforded multiple opportunities and the practice should be meaningful. Typically when a new skill is introduced, it will be done in a large group first, followed by smaller group or partner practice, and finally independent practice. Evaluators observed appropriate practice opportunities in almost three-quarters of the classrooms (81%). These were observed most frequently in kindergarten and first-grade classrooms.

Monitoring and Feedback

In order to use classroom instruction time wisely, teachers need to monitor how well students understand the material they are working with, and make almost instantaneous judgments about whether students need more practice or are ready to move to something else. They also need to address misunderstandings right away and replace them with correct information.

In 2008, evaluators witnessed teachers monitoring student understanding in three out of four observations (71%). An important piece of monitoring is providing direct and frequent feedback to students. When students made errors in their reading, did teachers catch those errors and give students feedback telling them they were incorrect? Did they encourage them to continue down a correct

line of thinking? Evaluators heard such feedback in 65 percent of the visited classrooms. Evaluators witnessed the most frequent monitoring and feedback in kindergarten and first-grade classrooms.

Student Engagement

Evaluators saw strong student engagement— with the majority of the students participating most of the time with little or no off-task behaviors—in half of the classrooms (53%). Kindergarten classrooms were less likely to be highly engaging compared to the other grades. One interviewed teacher provided some insight into engagement in kindergarten classrooms:

> *The materials that we have and the time allotment does not match; 90 minutes of class and 25 minutes of materials—still a big gap to fill; we add in reading readiness and play with them a little more, writing games, phoneme segmentation games; have fun with it and kids seem to pay attention a lot better than just the core program. Hard to get and keep their attention for that full time. (Teacher)*

Evaluators witnessed a substantial number of classrooms (40%) with a high percentage (25% or more) of off-task students. On average, these self-contained classrooms had 13 students, and three of the seven had para-professional support; the majority of the classrooms were engaged in whole-group instruction during the observation. Still, several interviewed coaches reported focusing some of their efforts on engagement this year; some reported seeing some new strategies in the classrooms.

Provision of Interventions

Interventions are a critical part of the Reading First design, providing additional instruction for students who need more than the core reading program in order to read at grade level. Interventions are expected to be data-

based and targeted at students' needs. Additionally they should be delivered in well-structured, intensive small-group sessions by trained providers.

About half of all cohort 2 students were provided interventions during the 2007–2008 school year. While this represents a decrease in the proportion served last year, two-thirds of coaches (representing an increase over last year) reported their school was serving all of their struggling readers in interventions.

Interventions materials were reported to meet the needs of all students by most coaches, but a smaller proportion of teachers. The majority of interventions were delivered to groups of less than seven students, the average group size was five students.

Interventions were provided most frequently by paraprofessionals and teachers; however the staffing and training of intervention providers continued to present challenges to coaches.

Like other years, half of the coaches (50%) agreed their school did an excellent job providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who needed them; a larger

proportion of teachers (67%) and principals (92%) agreed with this statement (see Figure 5-3).

Students Served in Interventions

Table 5-1 reports the proportion of students served in intensive interventions (outside the reading block, at least two hours per week for at least six weeks) and in less-intensive interventions, as reported by the coach.

Table 5-1
Students Receiving Interventions

	Intensive interventions	Less-intensive interventions
2005–06	568 (34% of students)	420 (25% of students)
2006–07	705 (41%)	472 (27%)
2007–08	653 (39%)	306 (18%)

Approximately 39 percent of all K-3 students across the funded schools received intensive interventions; another 18 percent received less-intensive interventions. These figures represent a decrease from 2006–2007 in percentages of students served through interventions.

Figure 5-3

Perception of Interventions
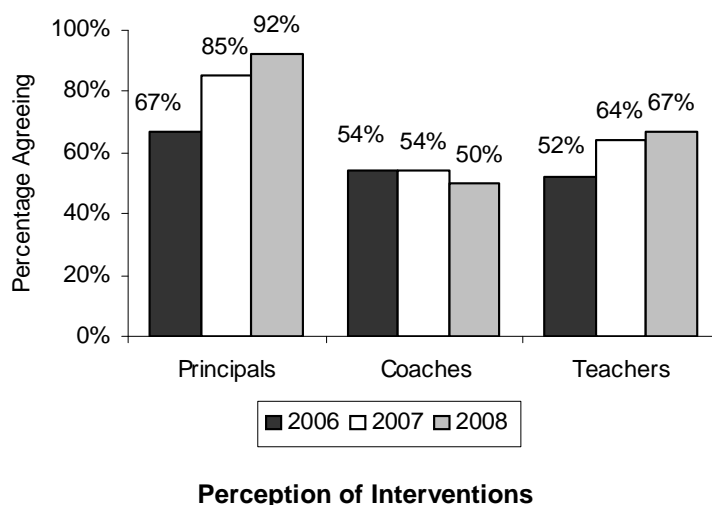
Prioritizing Need

Schools often have limited resources to provide interventions. As a result, they have to make decisions regarding which students receive these services. Nearly all of the coaches (82%) indicated they provided interventions to all of their *most* struggling readers; two-thirds of coaches (64%) indicated they were able to meet the needs of all of their *strategic* students. An equal percentage of schools (64%) were able to serve *all* of their struggling readers, an increase of 18 percentage points from last year (see Table 5-2).

When interviewed, an equal percentage of coaches indicated that they served *all* of their struggling students in interventions, primarily focused on *intensive* students in interventions, or served both *intensive* and *strategic* students in interventions. One coach commented:

> *Intervention room is low strategic and intensive; they are the neediest. The teachers can provide for the rest of the students in their classrooms. (Coach)*

While a third of schools were unable to meet the needs of the majority of their *strategic* students, many coaches and teachers commented that the success of their intervention program this year was that students were making gains:

> *Our biggest achievement is that a good number of the intensive students moved to strategic, and a good number of strategic students moved to benchmark. (Coach)*

> *They're successful – better fluency and confidence in reading. (Teacher)*

Intervention Materials

Most coaches (88%, representing a 39 percent increase from last year) felt that the materials they used to provide interventions were aligned to students' needs. Like last year, teachers were far less likely than coaches (63%) to agree that intervention materials matched the needs of students.

When asked about interventions, several interviewed coaches indicated that the acquisition of a new intervention curriculum was their biggest success this year. Others indicated that getting enough materials, and meeting the needs of a variety of students in the classroom, were challenges. Many interviewed teachers indicated that students needed more variety with their intervention materials. For example, one commented:

> *In the core program we read the books in each theme several times. After three times, the students won't stay focused. I try to help by listening on tape, but it's hard to stay on task over and over and over. (Teacher)*

Table 5-2
Proportion of Eligible Students Receiving Interventions

	Percent of Schools		
	2005–2006	2006–2007	2007–2008
All students in "strategic" group receive interventions	59	67	64
All students in "intensive" group receive interventions	72	73	82
All students in both groups receive interventions	46	46	64

Group Size

Research suggests that interventions are most effective when delivered to small groups, and that interventions for the most intensive students should be even smaller (Pikulski 1994; Torgesen 2004). The majority of interventions in Montana Reading First schools continued to be delivered to groups of six or fewer students (82%); the average group size was five students. Coaches at two schools reported serving intensive students in groups as large as eight students.

Intervention Providers and Training

At Montana Reading First schools, interventions were provided by a wide range of individuals. Like last year, interventions were reportedly provided most often by paraprofessionals (83% of schools). A larger proportion of K-3 teachers (67%, up from 46%), but a smaller proportion of coaches (50%, down from 67%), did so this year, compared to last.

The majority of interviewed coaches indicated that having limited staff members to lead intervention groups was a significant challenge in providing interventions during the school year. These reports were corroborated by survey data. Half of the coaches, who indicated they were unable to serve all of their eligible students in interventions, identified insufficient staffing as a primary obstacle.

Training of intervention providers continued to be an issue at some schools. Consistently since 2006, at least one-quarter of coaches and one-third of teachers failed to agree that their school's intervention providers were well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers (see Figure 5-4).

Figure 5-4

Perception of Intervention Providers' Training
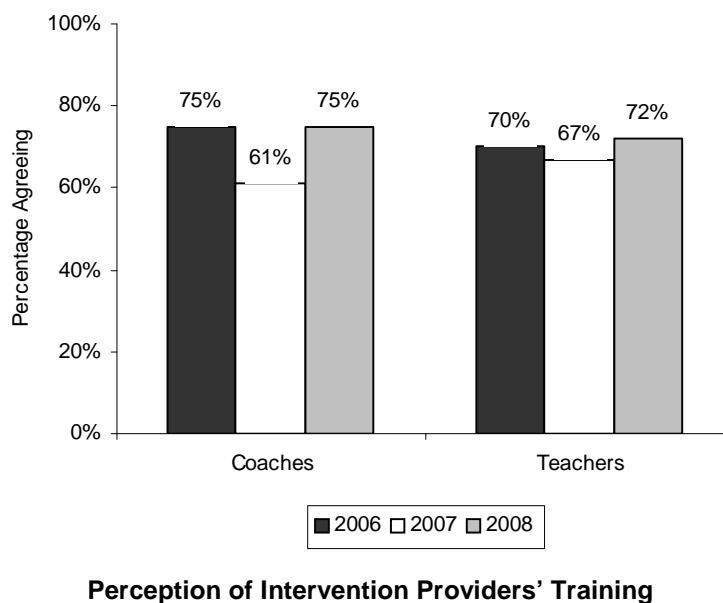
CHAPTER SIX: STUDENT ASSESSMENT RESULTS

All Montana Reading First schools use the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS) to monitor student progress in reading. The DIBELS is administered three times a year in the fall, winter, and spring. Chapter 2: Methods contains a detailed description of the procedures for coding and analyzing the raw scores.

Analysis of DIBELS assessment results are presented as follows:

- Project-level results: This section combines results from cohorts 1 and 2 to present a picture of achievement across all 31 Montana Reading First schools in 2007–2008. It also explores the achievement patterns of American Indian students, students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (FRL), and students eligible for special education from all Montana Reading First schools.

- Cohort-level results: This section gives graphic overviews of 2007–2008 results, by cohort. It presents within-year and across-year comparisons. School-level results are included in tables at the end of this section.

Please note that all data are matched, meaning they include only students with valid fall and spring scores.

The evaluation found that by spring 2008, overall, for Montana Reading First, kindergarten had the highest percentage of students at benchmark (80%), followed by first grade (74%), second grade (64%), and third grade (60%). Kindergarten and first grade had the lowest percentage of students at the intensive level, while grade two had the highest percentage (16%). These trends were similar for both cohorts. Compared to fall 2007 (for Montana Reading First, and for both

cohorts), the percentages of students at benchmark in spring 2008 represented statistically significant gains at all grade levels.

From fall 2007 to spring 2008, statistically significant changes in the percentage of students at the intensive level were made in kindergarten and third grade for Montana Reading First as a whole and for both cohorts. Such changes were significant at second grade for Montana Reading First as a whole and for cohort 1. While the percentage of Special Education students at the intensive level declined from fall to spring in every grade, it grew larger from kindergarten to third grade, such that, by spring 2008, slightly more than half of students eligible for special education were still at the intensive level.

Montana Reading First was most successful in closing the achievement gap between white and American Indian students. It reduced that gap at all grade levels, except second, and virtually closed it in cohort 2. However, achievement gaps persist between white and American Indian students, and those who are eligible for FRL and special education and those who are not eligible for these programs.

In both cohorts from spring 2007 to spring 2008, at almost every grade, an increased percentage of students were at benchmark; and at every grade, a decreased percentage of students were at the intensive level.

For cohort 1, at almost every spring since 2004, at every grade level, increased percentages of students were at benchmark and decreased percentages of students were at intensive.

For an intact group of students who began kindergarten in 2005 and finished third grade in 2008, larger proportions of children achieved benchmark each year than children in the same grades in spring 2004. Montana

Reading First was found to be effective for 73 percent of these students. Significant numbers of children who had relatively low reading skills in kindergarten improved the level of their reading skills by third grade, while children who had good reading skills in kindergarten maintained their level of skill through third grade

2007–2008 Project-Level DIBELS Results

Table 6-1 shows the percentage of Montana Reading First students in the intensive, strategic, and benchmark categories in spring 2008.

Kindergarten had the highest percentage of students at benchmark (80%), followed by first grade (74%), second grade (64%), and third grade (60%). Kindergarten and first grade had the lowest percentage of students at the intensive level, while second grade had the highest percentage (16%).

Table 6-2 shows gains in the percentage of students at benchmark and at intensive from fall 2007 to spring 2008. While the kindergarten changes were the largest by far,

statistically significant *increases* were detected at every grade (McNemar chi-square $p < .001$) and statistically significant *decreases* were detected at all grades, except first (McNemar chi squares $p < .01$).

Table 6-1
Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations, Cohorts 1 and 2

All Montana Reading First Schools	N	Spring 2008 Instruction Support Recommendation Percent of Students		
		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Kindergarten	1,254	9	11	80
Grade 1	1,236	8	18	74
Grade 2	1,147	16	18	66
Grade 3	1,187	12	28	60

Table 6-2
Percent of K-3 Students at Benchmark and at Intensive Over Time, Cohorts 1 and 2

	Grade			
Percent of Students at	K	1	2	3
N	1,254	1,236	1,147	1,187
Benchmark				
Fall 2007	28	65	52	54
Winter 2008	66	63	70	56
Spring 2008	80	74	66	60
Percentage Point Change Fall to Spring)	+52	+9	+14	+6
Intensive				
Fall 2007	28	8	18	20
Winter 2008	9	7	16	17
Spring 2008	9	8	16	13
Percentage Point Change (Fall to Spring)	-19	0	-2	-7

American Indian Students

Approximately one-third of all Montana Reading First students were American Indian. Figure 6-1 shows the percentage of American Indian students at benchmark in spring 2008 compared to their white peers.[7] In each grade, a higher percentage of white students were at benchmark than American Indian students. The gap was largest in kindergarten (12 points) and smallest in first grade (four points).

In order to close the achievement gap, the performance gains of American Indian students during the year needed to outpace their peers. Table 6-3 shows that American Indian students narrowed the achievement gap by six percentage points in kindergarten, three percentage points in first grade, and 13 percentage points in third grade. The gap increased by one point in second grade.

Figure 6-1
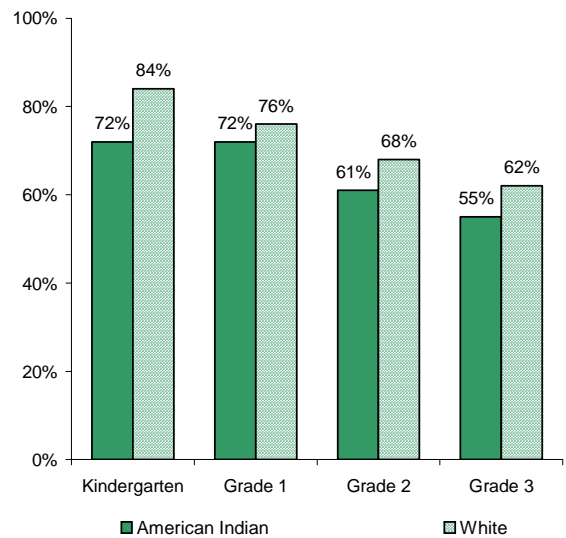
Percentage of American Indian and White Students at Benchmark, Spring 2008

Table 6-3
Gains in the Percentage of Students at Benchmark from Fall to Spring, American Indian and White Students

	Gains in the Percentage of Students at Benchmark from Fall 2007 to Spring 2008		Percentage Point Narrowing or Widening of the Achievement Gap
	White (N=3047)	American Indian (N=1506)	
Kindergarten	49%	55%	-6
Grade 1	8%	11%	-3
Grade 2	14%	13%	+1
Grade 3	1%	14%	-13

[7] Results for other racial and ethnic groups are not reported due to the small sample size

Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-price Lunch

More than half (57%) of Montana Reading First students were eligible for FRL. Figure 6-2 shows that at kindergarten and first grade, students eligible for FRL achieve benchmark at a rate approximately 10 percentage points lower than students not eligible, and at second and third grades, at a rate approximately 15 percentage points lower than students not eligible.

In order to close the achievement gap, the achievement gains of students eligible for FRL during the year needed to outpace the gains of students not eligible. Table 6-4 shows that, in kindergarten and grade one, students eligible for FRL made the same percentage-point gains as students not eligible. However, in second grade, students eligible for FRL made smaller gains from fall to spring than students not eligible. Third grade closed the achievement gap by seven percentage points.

Figure 6-2.
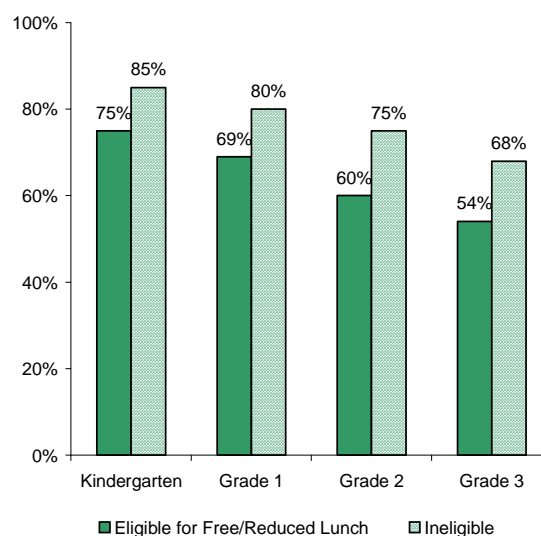
Percentage of Students Eligible and Ineligible for FRL at Benchmark, Spring 2008

Table 6-4
Gains in Percentage of K-3 Students at Benchmark from Fall to Spring, Eligible, and Ineligible for FRL

	Gains in the Percentage of Students at Benchmark from Fall 2007 to Spring 2008		Percentage Point Narrowing or Widening of the Achievement Gap
	Ineligible N=2099	Eligible for FRL N=2725	
Kindergarten	51%	51%	0
Grade 1	9%	9%	0
Grade 2	15%	13%	+2
Grade 3	2%	9%	-7

Students Eligible for Special Education

Less than ten percent (7%) of all Montana Reading First students were eligible for special education. Figure 6-3 shows the percentage of students eligible and ineligible for special education at benchmark in spring 2008. It is clear from Figure 6-3 that, while the percentage of students not eligible for special education who achieve benchmark decreases over the grades, for students eligible for special education the decrease is more precipitous.

Table 6-5 shows that the percentage of students eligible for special education who reached benchmark increased from fall to spring in kindergarten, first, and second grades. The increase at kindergarten was slightly slower than for students not eligible; the increases at first and second grade were approximately the same magnitude as the increase for students not eligible. At third grade, the achievement gap increased when fewer students eligible for SPED met benchmark in the spring while more students ineligible did so.

Figure 6-3.
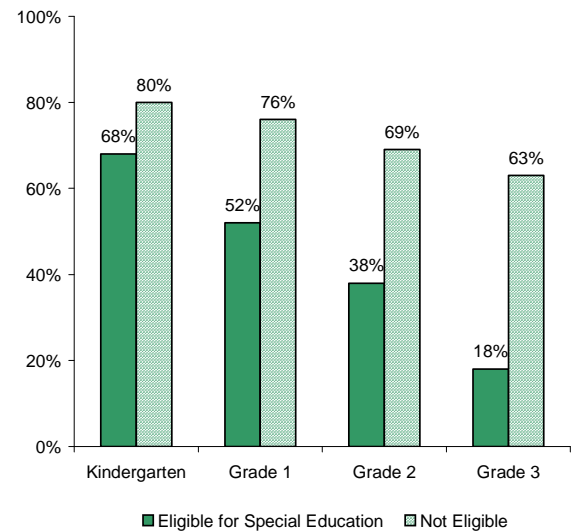
Percentage of Students Eligible and Ineligible for Special Education at Benchmark, Spring 2008

Table 6-5
Gains in Percentage of K-3 Students at Benchmark from Fall to Spring
Eligible and Ineligible for Special Education

	Gains in the Percentage of Students at Benchmark from Fall 2007 to Spring 2008		Percentage Point Narrowing or Widening of the Achievement Gap
	Ineligible N=4478	Eligible for Special Ed N=346	
Kindergarten	51%	48%	+3
Grade 1	9%	10%	-1
Grade 2	14%	13%	+1
Grade 3	6%	-3%	+9%

Table 6-6 depicts the change in the percentage of special education students at the intensive level from fall 2007 to spring 2008. The percentage of special education students at the intensive level decreased from fall to spring in all grades, with the largest decrease occurring at kindergarten. At the same time, however, the percentage of students eligible for special education who were at the intensive level grew larger over the grades. In the spring, slightly more than half of students eligible for special education were still at the intensive level.

Table 6-6
Change in Percentage of K-3 Students in Intensive from Fall to Spring, Students Eligible for Special Education

	N	Percentage of Students in Intensive		
		Fall 2007	Spring 2008	Percentage Point Change (Fall to Spring)
Kindergarten	56	38%	21%	-17
Grade 1	81	28%	27%	-1
Grade 2	106	50%	43%	-7
Grade 3	103	54%	52%	-2

Cohort-level DIBELS Results

Table 6-7 summarizes spring 2008 results by
cohort. These cohort level results mirror those
for Montana Reading First as a whole. The
one exception is that the achievement gap
between American Indian and white students
is nonexistent in cohort 2.

Table 6-7
Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations, By Cohort

	Percent of Students			
	N	Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Cohort 1	3,133	12%	18%	71%
Kindergarten	811	9%	10%	81%
Grade 1	811	8%	18%	74%
Grade 2	746	17%	16%	67%
Grade 3	765	13%	26%	60%
American Indian	958	17%	19%	63%
Hispanic	133	16%	19%	65%
White	1,974	9%	17%	74%
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	1,295	6%	14%	80%
Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	1,838	16%	20%	64%
Not Eligible for Special Education	2,927	10%	18%	73%
Eligible for Special Education	206	38%	20%	42%
Cohort 2	1,691	10%	21%	69%
Kindergarten	443	10%	12%	78%
Grade 1	425	6%	19%	75%
Grade 2	401	13%	22%	64%
Grade 3	422	11%	31%	58%
American Indian	548	10%	22%	69%
Hispanic	48	8%	31%	60%
White	1,073	10%	20%	70%
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	804	7%	20%	73%
Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	887	13%	22%	65%
Not Eligible for Special Education	1,551	8%	21%	72%
Eligible for Special Education	140	39%	24%	37%

Percentage of Students at Benchmark Fall and Spring

Fall 2007–Spring 2008. Figures 6-4 and 6-5 show the fall to spring changes in the percentages of students at the DIBELS benchmark for cohort 1 and cohort 2, respectively. The fall to spring changes in the percentage of students at benchmark were statistically significant (McNemar chi square $p<.05$) at all grade levels and in both cohorts.

Figure 6-4
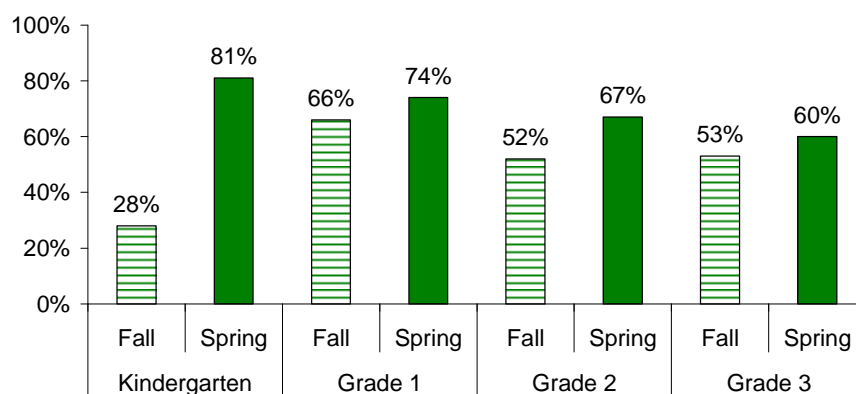
Percentage of Cohort 1 Students at Benchmark Fall 2007 and Spring 2008

Figure 6-5
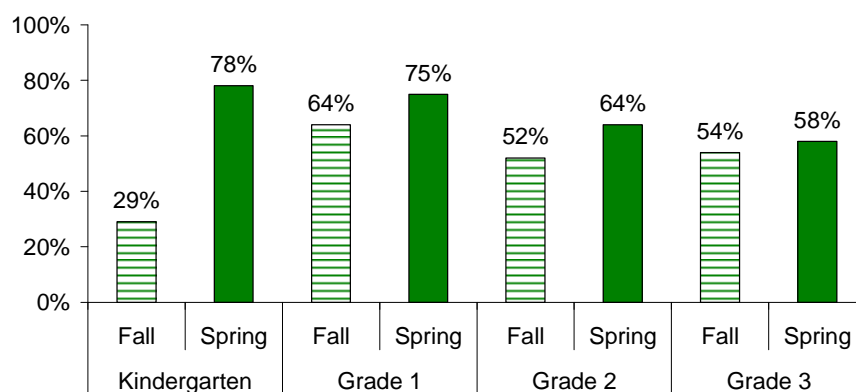
Percentage of Cohort 2 Students at Benchmark Fall 2007 and Spring 2008

Figures 6-6 and 6-7 show fall to spring
changes in the percentages of students at the
intensive level, for cohort 1 and cohort 2,
respectively. The fall to spring differences
were statistically-significant at kindergarten,
second grade, and third grade for cohort 1,
and at kindergarten and third grades for
cohort 2 (McNemar chi square $p<.05$).

Figure 6-6
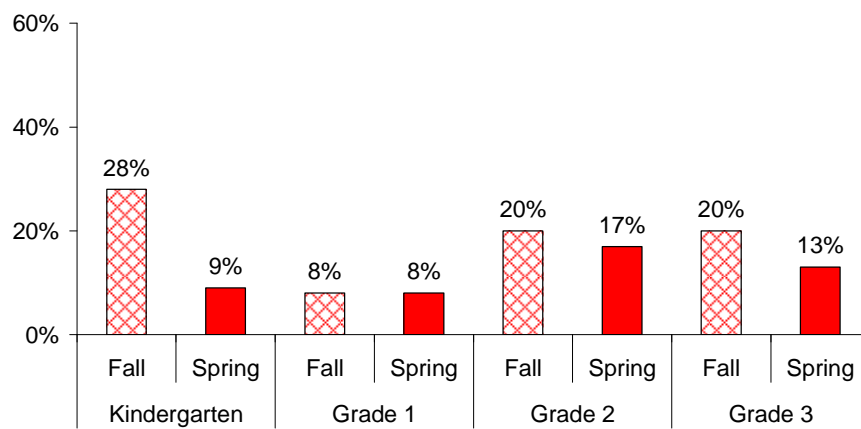
Percentage of Cohort 1 Students at Intensive Fall 2007 and Spring 2008

Figure 6-7
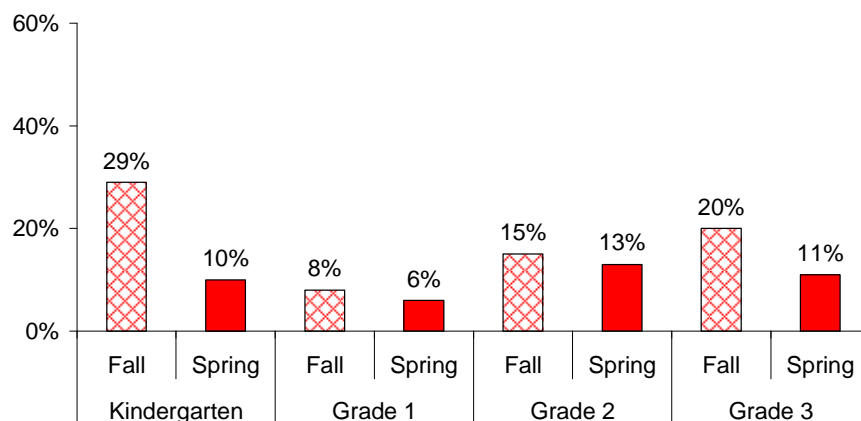
Percentage of Cohort 2 Students at Intensive Fall 2007 and Spring 2008

Figures 6-8 and 6-9 show the percentages of students at benchmark in spring 2007 and spring 2008 for cohort 1 and cohort 2, respectively. Changes were not statistically-significant at any grade level in either cohort.

Figure 6-8
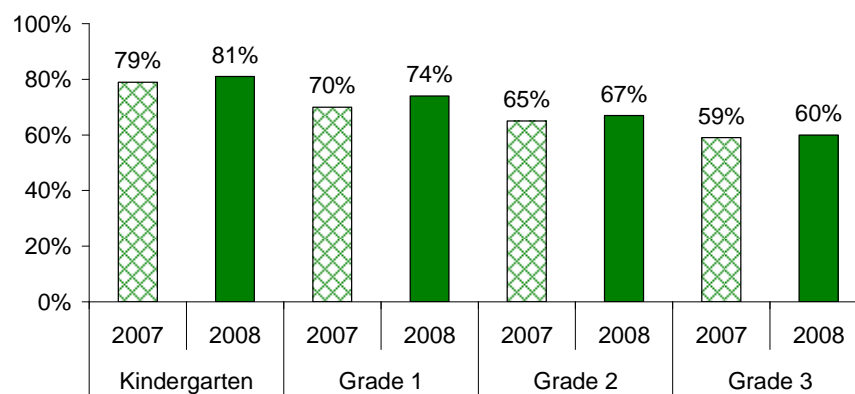
Percentage of Cohort 1 Students at Benchmark Spring 2007 and Spring 2008

Figure 6-9
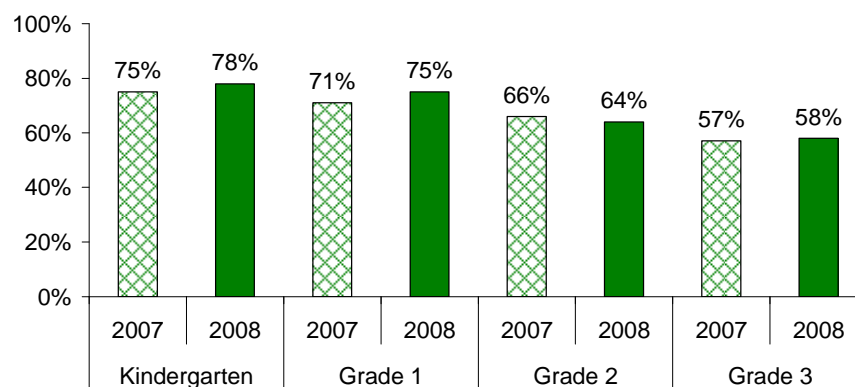
Percentage of Cohort 2 Students at Benchmark Spring 2007 and Spring 2008

Figures 6-10 and 6-11 show the percentages of students at intensive in spring 2007 and spring 2008 for cohort 1 and cohort 2, respectively. The three percentage point decline experienced in first grade in cohort 1 was the only change that reached statistical significance (Pearson chi square $p<.05$).

Figure 6-10
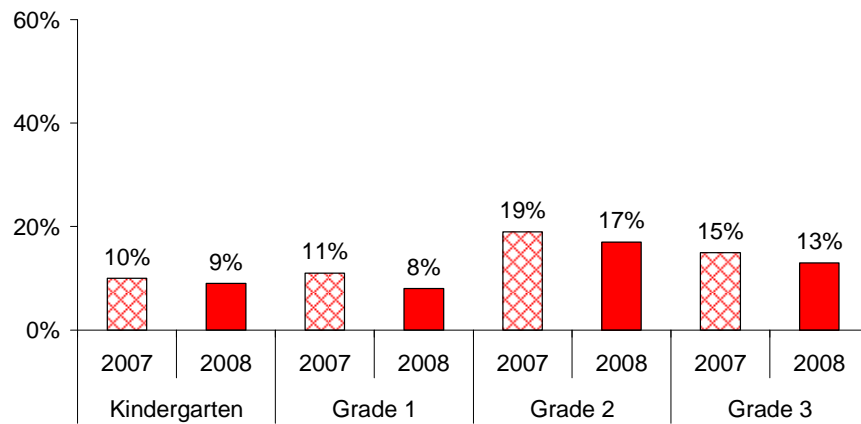
Percentage of Cohort 1 Students at Intensive Spring 2007 and Spring 2008

Figure 6-11
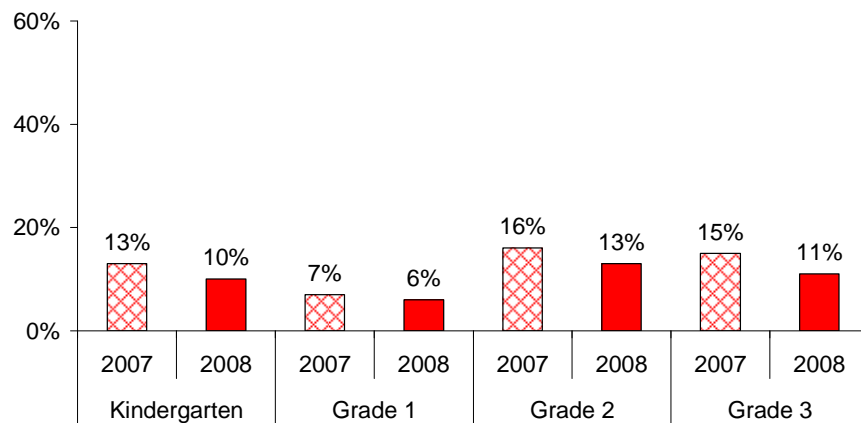
Percentage of Cohort 2 Students at Intensive Spring 2007 and Spring 2008

Progress in Cohort 1

Figure 6-12 presents the changes in the percentage of cohort 1 students at or above benchmark as measured by the DIBELS every spring from 2004 through 2008. The figure shows that since 2004, at all grades levels, increased percentages of students were at benchmark in spring. Specifically:

- The proportion of kindergarten students achieving the spring benchmark increased by 21 percentage points.

- The proportion of first-grade students achieving the spring benchmark increased by percentage 19 points.

- The proportion of second graders achieving the spring benchmark increased by 18 percentage points.

- The proportion of third graders achieving the spring benchmark increased by 18 percentage points.

Figure 6-12
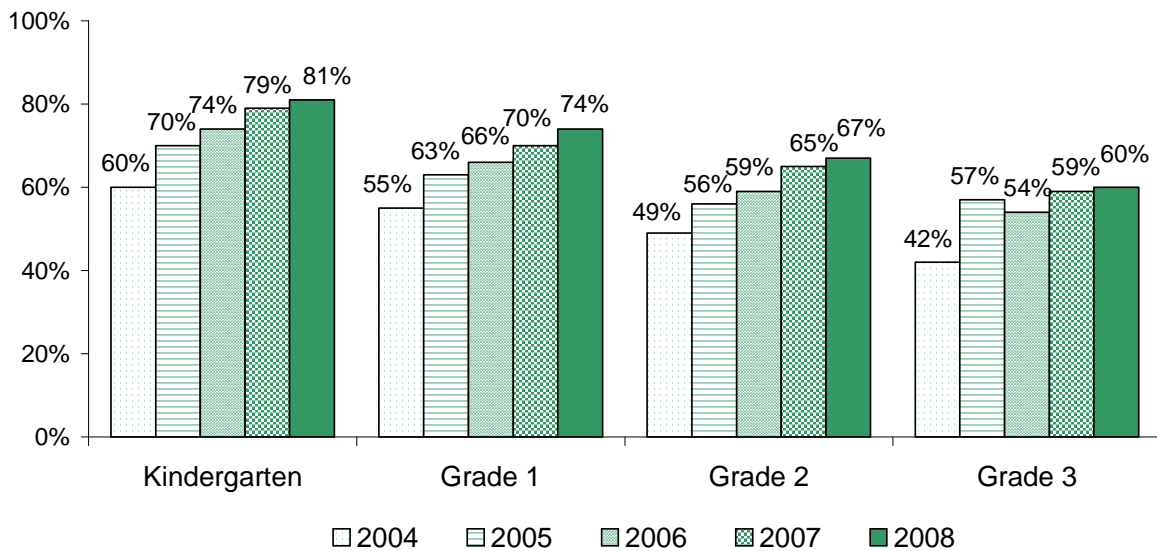
Percentage at Benchmark in Cohort 1 from Spring 2004 to Spring 2008

Figure 6-13 presents the changes in the percentage of cohort 1 students in intensive as measured by the DIBELS every spring from 2004 through 2008. The decreases in the percentage of students in intensive have generally become smaller over time, but the proportion of students at the intensive level were much smaller in spring 2008 than in spring 2004. The proportion of students at the intensive level decreased in all grades from spring 2007 to spring 2008.

Figure 6-13
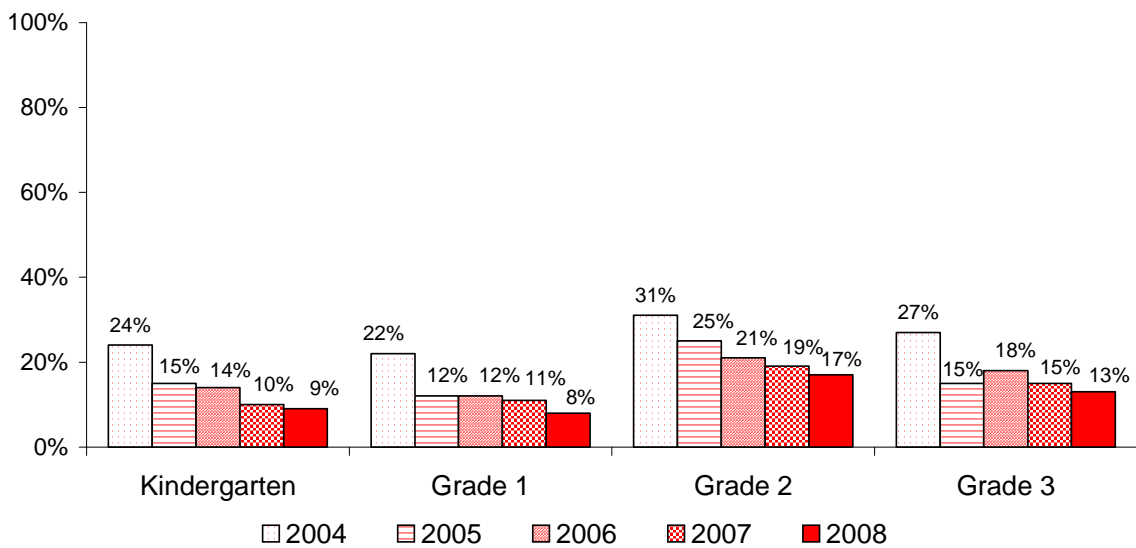
Percentage of Cohort 1 Students at the Intensive Level, Spring 2004 to Spring 2008

Achievement of Students in Reading First Since Kindergarten (Cohort 1 Only)

This section examines changes in DIBELS results for intact groups of students over time; specifically, it looks at the progress of students from cohort 1 schools who began kindergarten in fall 2004 and completed third grade in spring 2008. To ensure that these analyses captured students who received a full four years of the program, it only included students for whom four years of data were available (N=456).

Figure 6-14 presents the percentage of students at benchmark as the cohort moved from kindergarten through third grade. The level of achievement of children in this cohort is compared to the percentage of kindergarten, first, second, and third-grade students at benchmark in spring 2004.

It is clear that larger proportions of children in the intact group achieved benchmark than children in the same grades in spring 2004. This should not be over-interpreted as a straightforward indicator of the effect of Reading First because, among other things, intact groups of students typically have higher levels of achievement than groups of students that are more mobile.

Another way of estimating the effectiveness of Reading First is to compare students' level of achievement in third grade against their level of achievement in kindergarten. Ideally, all children who were at benchmark would have remained at benchmark and those who were at the intensive or strategic level in kindergarten would have advanced to the benchmark level by the end of third grade.

Figure 6-14.
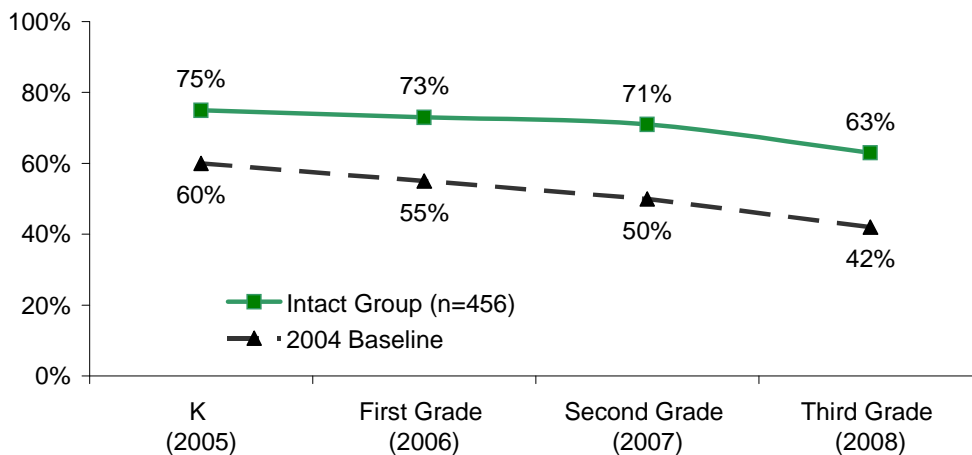
Percentages of an Intact Group of Cohort 1 Students at Benchmark from 2005 to 2008, Compared to a 2004 Baseline

Table 6-8 shows the percentages of children who were at the intensive, strategic, or benchmark levels in kindergarten and at each level in third grade. The estimate of effectiveness is the proportion of students who went from intensive to strategic or benchmark, the proportion who went from strategic to benchmark, and the proportion who started at benchmark and remained at benchmark. By this measure, in the longitudinal sample of 456 students, total effectiveness over four years in Reading First was 73 percent. More specifically:

- Most students who were at benchmark in the beginning of their kindergarten year remained there at the end of third grade (83% effectiveness).

- A majority of students who were at the strategic level in kindergarten advanced to benchmark by the end of third grade (64% effectiveness).

- A majority of children who were at the intensive level in kindergarten advanced either to the strategic level (35% effectiveness) or benchmark level (42% effectiveness) by the end of third grade.

In other words, significant numbers of children who had relatively low reading skills in kindergarten improved the level of their reading skills by third grade, while children who had good reading skills in kindergarten maintained their level of skill through third grade. It is important to note, however, that one-quarter of students at intensive in the fall of kindergarten remained there in the spring of third grade, and a fair number of students failed to reach benchmark by third grade.

Table 6-8
Movement of Students Among ISRs (Total Effectiveness), Fall 2004 to Spring 2008

Fall 2004 ISR (Start of Kindergarten)	n	Spring 2008 ISR (End of Third Grade) Percent of Students			
		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark	"Effectiveness"
Intensive	130	23	35	42	77
Strategic	193	11	25	64	64
Benchmark	133	3	14	83	83
Total Effectiveness	*456*				*73*

This final section includes tables of data with individual school results. Tables 6-9 to 6-12 show the percentage of students at each level of achievement in each grade in spring 2008. Tables 6-12 to 6-15 show the change in the percentage of students at benchmark from fall to spring in each school, by grade.

School-level results varied, although these variations should be interpreted with caution due to different school characteristics, including school size and student demographics.

Table 6-9
Kindergarten Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations, by Cohort and School

Cohort 1		N	Percentage of Students		
			Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Billings	Newman	31	6%	10%	84%
	Ponderosa	43	5%	19%	77%
Butte	Kennedy	45	0%	22%	78%
	Whittier	44	5%	9%	86%
Centerville	Centerville	12	0%	17%	83%
Charlo	Charlo	27	4%	0%	96%
Dixon	Dixon	9	33%	0%	67%
East Helena	Eastgate	108	1%	1%	98%
Great Falls	Longfellow	54	17%	11%	72%
	West	70	13%	11%	76%
Hardin	Crow Agency	61	15%	13%	72%
	Hardin Primary	92	20%	14%	66%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	10	20%	10%	70%
Helena	Warren	43	2%	2%	95%
Libby	Libby	73	4%	10%	86%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	51	16%	18%	67%
	Pablo	38	8%	11%	82%
Cohort 2					
Box Elder	Box Elder	45	7%	9%	84%
Butte	West	62	8%	8%	84%
Dodson	Dodson	7	29%	0%	71%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	3	0%	0%	100%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	88	10%	10%	80%
Frazer	Frazer	14	14%	14%	71%
Great Falls	Morningside	41	2%	5%	93%
Harlem	Harlem	30	10%	20%	70%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	9	22%	22%	56%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	38	8%	16%	76%
Somers	Lakeside	52	8%	15%	77%
Stevensville	Stevensville	54	20%	17%	63%

Table 6-10
First-Grade Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations, by Cohort and School

Cohort 1		N	Percentage of Students		
			Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Billings	Newman	50	22%	12%	66%
	Ponderosa	56	20%	23%	57%
Butte	Kennedy	37	5%	5%	89%
	Whittier	48	0%	17%	83%
Centerville	Centerville	14	7%	14%	79%
Charlo	Charlo	20	0%	20%	80%
Dixon	Dixon	8	25%	25%	50%
East Helena	Eastgate	115	4%	11%	84%
Great Falls	Longfellow	34	21%	15%	65%
	West	76	1%	12%	87%
Hardin	Crow Agency	35	9%	23%	69%
	Hardin Primary	94	6%	30%	64%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	11	9%	9%	82%
Helena	Warren	40	8%	22%	70%
Libby	Libby	85	6%	18%	76%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	47	6%	28%	66%
	Pablo	41	12%	24%	63%
Cohort 2					
Box Elder	Box Elder	25	0%	8%	92%
Butte	West	64	6%	8%	86%
Dodson	Dodson	3	0%	67%	33%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	3	0%	67%	33%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	92	11%	27%	62%
Frazer	Frazer	5	20%	40%	40%
Great Falls	Morningside	38	3%	5%	92%
Harlem	Harlem	32	0%	19%	81%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	12	33%	17%	50%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	34	0%	9%	91%
Somers	Lakeside	63	5%	25%	70%
Stevensville	Stevensville	54	7%	22%	70%

Table 6-11
Second-Grade Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations, by Cohort and School

Cohort 1		N	Percentage of Students		
			Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Billings	Newman	33	39%	9%	52%
	Ponderosa	50	32%	16%	52%
Butte	Kennedy	39	15%	15%	69%
	Whittier	53	9%	8%	83%
Centerville	Centerville	7	0%	14%	86%
Charlo	Charlo	28	11%	4%	86%
Dixon	Dixon	7	14%	0%	86%
East Helena	Eastgate	105	8%	15%	77%
Great Falls	Longfellow	39	23%	18%	59%
	West	65	5%	18%	77%
Hardin	Crow Agency	30	13%	17%	70%
	Hardin Primary	83	13%	24%	63%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	6	17%	0%	83%
Helena	Warren	41	12%	22%	66%
Libby	Libby	71	27%	21%	52%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	49	29%	10%	61%
	Pablo	40	18%	25%	58%
Cohort 2					
Box Elder	Box Elder	35	17%	29%	54%
Butte	West	55	7%	22%	71%
Dodson	Dodson	2	50%	0%	50%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	2	0%	0%	100%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	67	12%	10%	78%
Frazer	Frazer	8	38%	12%	50%
Great Falls	Morningside	40	10%	30%	60%
Harlem	Harlem	33	18%	18%	64%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	6	17%	33%	50%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	42	7%	17%	76%
Somers	Lakeside	48	19%	29%	52%
Stevensville	Stevensville	63	14%	29%	57%

Table 6-12
Third-Grade Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations, by Cohort and School

Cohort 1		N	Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
				Percentage of Students	
Billings	Newman	39	18%	21%	62%
	Ponderosa	48	15%	40%	46%
Butte	Kennedy	35	6%	23%	71%
	Whittier	63	8%	24%	68%
Centerville	Centerville	14	7%	7%	86%
Charlo	Charlo	24	25%	17%	58%
Dixon	Dixon	9	33%	22%	44%
East Helena	Eastgate	113	6%	30%	64%
Great Falls	Longfellow	27	30%	19%	52%
	West	60	7%	38%	55%
Hardin	Crow Agency	28	11%	18%	71%
	Hardin Primary	86	13%	33%	55%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	10	10%	30%	60%
Helena	Warren	41	17%	27%	56%
Libby	Libby	80	16%	25%	59%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	50	24%	16%	60%
	Pablo	38	13%	18%	68%
Cohort 2					
Box Elder	Box Elder	30	7%	13%	80%
Butte	West	45	11%	22%	67%
Dodson	Dodson	3	0%	67%	33%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	3	33%	0%	67%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	71	20%	37%	44%
Frazer	Frazer	9	0%	44%	56%
Great Falls	Morningside	47	4%	28%	68%
Harlem	Harlem	36	6%	47%	47%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	13	31%	31%	38%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	34	0%	41%	59%
Somers	Lakeside	75	5%	28%	67%
Stevensville	Stevensville	56	21%	29%	50%

Table 6-13
Percentage of Kindergarten Students at Benchmark Over Time, by Cohort and School

Cohort 1		N	Fall	Winter	Spring
Billings	Newman	31	29%	55%	84%
	Ponderosa	43	16%	65%	77%
Butte	Kennedy	45	27%	71%	78%
	Whittier	44	30%	77%	86%
Centerville	Centerville	12	42%	58%	83%
Charlo	Charlo	27	52%	89%	96%
Dixon	Dixon	9	56%	67%	67%
East Helena	Eastgate	108	40%	89%	98%
Great Falls	Longfellow	54	19%	59%	72%
	West	70	29%	66%	76%
Hardin	Crow Agency	61	18%	56%	72%
	Hardin Primary	92	25%	63%	66%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	10	10%	50%	70%
Helena	Warren	43	33%	86%	95%
Libby	Libby	73	41%	63%	86%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	51	12%	50%	67%
	Pablo	38	16%	47%	82%
Cohort 2					
Box Elder	Box Elder	45	13%	51%	84%
Butte	West	62	27%	67%	84%
Dodson	Dodson	7	14%	57%	71%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	3	33%	67%	100%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	88	17%	62%	80%
Frazer	Frazer	14	7%	36%	71%
Great Falls	Morningside	41	51%	80%	93%
Harlem	Harlem	30	23%	66%	70%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	9	11%	56%	56%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	38	32%	71%	76%
Somers	Lakeside	52	52%	70%	77%
Stevensville	Stevensville	54	35%	62%	63%

Table 6-14
Percentage of First-Grade Students at Benchmark Over Time, by Cohort and School

Cohort 1		N	Fall	Winter	Spring
Billings	Newman	50	40%	36%	66%
	Ponderosa	56	55%	38%	57%
Butte	Kennedy	37	89%	86%	89%
	Whittier	48	85%	81%	83%
Centerville	Centerville	14	57%	57%	79%
Charlo	Charlo	20	70%	75%	80%
Dixon	Dixon	8	50%	50%	50%
East Helena	Eastgate	115	83%	78%	84%
Great Falls	Longfellow	34	56%	55%	65%
	West	76	63%	67%	87%
Hardin	Crow Agency	35	57%	42%	69%
	Hardin Primary	94	64%	55%	64%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	11	82%	82%	82%
Helena	Warren	40	72%	62%	70%
Libby	Libby	85	73%	54%	76%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	47	55%	64%	66%
	Pablo	41	41%	49%	63%
Cohort 2					
Box Elder	Box Elder	25	72%	76%	92%
Butte	West	64	77%	87%	86%
Dodson	Dodson	3	0%	33%	33%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	3	33%	33%	33%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	92	51%	39%	62%
Frazer	Frazer	5	20%	25%	40%
Great Falls	Morningside	38	84%	92%	92%
Harlem	Harlem	32	56%	58%	81%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	12	58%	50%	50%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	34	88%	88%	91%
Somers	Lakeside	63	57%	70%	70%
Stevensville	Stevensville	54	61%	64%	70%

Table 6-15
Percentage of Second-Grade Students at Benchmark Over Time, by Cohort and School

Cohort 1		N	Fall	Winter	Spring
Billings	Newman	33	42%	48%	52%
	Ponderosa	50	36%	56%	52%
Butte	Kennedy	39	72%	77%	69%
	Whittier	53	83%	89%	83%
Centerville	Centerville	7	86%	86%	86%
Charlo	Charlo	28	79%	86%	86%
Dixon	Dixon	7	57%	71%	86%
East Helena	Eastgate	105	46%	77%	77%
Great Falls	Longfellow	39	46%	59%	59%
	West	65	62%	75%	77%
Hardin	Crow Agency	30	57%	63%	70%
	Hardin Primary	83	40%	75%	63%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	6	33%	83%	83%
Helena	Warren	41	49%	66%	66%
Libby	Libby	71	42%	61%	52%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	49	45%	65%	61%
	Pablo	40	48%	68%	58%
Cohort 2					
Box Elder	Box Elder	35	51%	69%	54%
Butte	West	55	58%	80%	71%
Dodson	Dodson	2	50%	50%	50%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	2	100%	100%	100%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	67	57%	79%	78%
Frazer	Frazer	8	62%	50%	50%
Great Falls	Morningside	40	65%	68%	60%
Harlem	Harlem	33	55%	69%	64%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	6	17%	50%	50%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	42	50%	79%	76%
Somers	Lakeside	48	31%	49%	52%
Stevensville	Stevensville	63	52%	71%	57%

Table 6-16
Percentage of Third-Grade Students at Benchmark Over Time, by Cohort and School

Cohort 1		N	Fall	Winter	Spring
Billings	Newman	33	42%	48%	52%
	Ponderosa	50	36%	56%	52%
Butte	Kennedy	39	72%	77%	69%
	Whittier	53	83%	89%	83%
Centerville	Centerville	7	86%	86%	86%
Charlo	Charlo	28	79%	86%	86%
Dixon	Dixon	7	57%	71%	86%
East Helena	Eastgate	105	46%	77%	77%
Great Falls	Longfellow	39	46%	59%	59%
	West	65	62%	75%	77%
Hardin	Crow Agency	30	57%	63%	70%
	Hardin Primary	83	40%	75%	63%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	6	33%	83%	83%
Helena	Warren	41	49%	66%	66%
Libby	Libby	71	42%	61%	52%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	49	45%	65%	61%
	Pablo	40	48%	68%	58%
Cohort 2					
Box Elder	Box Elder	35	51%	69%	54%
Butte	West	55	58%	80%	71%
Dodson	Dodson	2	50%	50%	50%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	2	100%	100%	100%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	67	57%	79%	78%
Frazer	Frazer	8	62%	50%	50%
Great Falls	Morningside	40	65%	68%	60%
Harlem	Harlem	33	55%	69%	64%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	6	17%	50%	50%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	42	50%	79%	76%
Somers	Lakeside	48	31%	49%	52%
Stevensville	Stevensville	63	52%	71%	57%

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUSTAINABILITY

This chapter, as well as Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, describe the structures and practices implemented under Reading First in Montana. While Chapters 3 and 4 focus solely on cohort 2, this chapter looks at evidence from both cohorts 1 and 2. It explores what happens when funding is greatly reduced, and Reading First schools and districts are no longer held accountable under the auspices of the grant.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first describes the extent to which Reading First has been sustained in cohort 1 schools. It summarizes the results of coach, principal, and teacher surveys meant to measure changes in implementation since last year. The second section looks at areas critical for sustainability, and cohort 2 schools' prospects for sustaining Reading First. It compares the experiences of both cohorts in their last year of full Reading First funding, and considers the experiences of cohort 1 schools over the past two years to help inform cohort 2 schools' prospects for successfully sustaining Reading First in the absence of continued funding.

The evaluation found that after two years in continuation, the 19 cohort 1 schools continued to sustain many required components of the program, including assessments, grade-level meetings, and interventions. Several components—the 90-minute reading block, the core program, and Reading Leadership Team (RLT) meetings— were implemented with slightly less fidelity in year five. Since spring 2006, the frequency of coaching, professional development for teachers and teachers' use of data declined.

Based on this and other evaluation data, it appears that sustaining Reading First may be more of a challenge for cohort 2 schools than for cohort 1. While there are many areas where the cohorts' experiences are similar,

differences exist. Cohort 2 schools will enter continuation with definite strengths: continued state, district, principal, and coach support; low staff member turnover; knowledge that several Reading First components are thought of as "business as usual;" prospects of continued professional development; and student success. It is uncertain if these can overcome the challenges associated with less support for Reading First evidenced by district coordinators, principals and teachers while possibly losing a number of coaches as the cohort 2 schools enter their fourth year of Reading First.

Cohort 1 Experiences

Spring 2006 marked the last year of full Reading First funding for cohort 1 schools. Starting fall 2006, these continuation schools were expected to continue implementing nearly all aspects of their Reading First grant—the 90-minute reading block, core program, interventions, benchmark and progress-monitoring assessments, and grade-level and RLT meetings. Maintaining a reading coach was optional. In turn, Montana Reading First would offer opportunities for their participation in professional development and technical assistance site visits. This section draws on data from surveys administered to principals, coaches, and teachers in these schools.

In 2007–2008, 19 cohort 1 schools continued implementing Reading First—participating in professional development and receiving technical assistance from the state. After two years in continuation, many required components of the program were sustained. These included benchmark and progress-monitoring assessments, grade-level meetings, and interventions. Furthermore, support for Reading First continued—at least at last year's levels— among districts, principals, and

teachers. Several components—the 90-minute reading block, the core program, and RLT meetings—were implemented with slightly less fidelity this year. Since starting in continuation, three components have declined: coaching, professional development for teachers and teachers' weekly use of data.

State Support to Cohort 1 Schools

The state provided similar professional development opportunities to cohort 1 schools in both 2006–2007 and 2007–2008. Last year, the majority of principals and coaches reported attending these meetings once or twice during the year; this year their frequency of attendance increased, such that the majority attended these events at least three times during the year (principals, 51%; coaches, 88%). Increased proportions of principals and coaches were pleased with the amount of training they received this year; a handful wanted more. Nearly all of the principals and coaches were pleased with the quality of training in instructional leadership and coaching that they respectively received.

In addition to the principal and coach meetings, the state reading specialists or Reading First director continued to visit the schools (generally every other month) to discuss action plans and provide technical assistance. While coaches reported receiving more frequent technical assistance visits compared to last year (the majority indicated receiving two to three visits, one-third of coaches reported four or more), they considered them slightly less helpful than the previous year.[8]

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[8] The wording on this item changed from 2007 to 2008. Last year 80 percent of coaches indicated the visits were "usually" or "always" helpful; this year 56 percent of coaches indicated they were "helpful" or "very helpful."

Implementation

Cohort 1 schools were expected to continue implementing most components of Reading First. The vast majority of the Montana Reading First cohort 1 schools (95%) continued as Reading First schools and received reduced funding; one school was discontinued. Of the 19 schools:

- Ten schools (53%) maintained a full-time coach (two fewer than last year)
- Five schools (26%) had part-time coaches (two more than last year)
- Four schools (21%) had no coach (one more than last year)

Compared to last year, implementation in cohort 1 schools **remained the same or increased** in the following areas:

Principal leadership. Principal turnover during the 2007–2008 school year was low (8%). Most principals continued to regularly observe most teachers' classrooms, although the frequency of providing feedback decreased from last year. The majority of principals still continued to use results from assessments when communicating with teachers and analyzing schoolwide trends; however for some tasks they used data more and for others they used data less.

Benchmark assessments. All schools continued to administer the DIBELS three times a year, and almost all teachers and principals agreed that their administration systems were present and organized. Coaches remained confident that DIBELS administration teams understood the administration and scoring of the assessment.

Staff member buy-in to Reading First. Teachers' support for the instructional changes made under Reading First remained the same.

District support. Most principals continued to agree that their district supported the continuation of Reading First and that no district program's clashed with it.

Grade-level meetings. Almost all teachers continued to report that they attended grade-level meetings; like last year, the majority did so two to three times a month. Compared to last year, a slightly smaller percentage, but still the majority of teachers, believed these meetings were useful.

Progress monitoring. According to coaches, more schools regularly progress-monitored students in all, or nearly all, classrooms; this year, 94 percent of coaches said their school did so, compared to 80 percent last year.

Interventions. Overall, coaches reported serving slightly more total students in interventions this year; fewer received intensive interventions (a decrease of 19 percentage points), but more received less-intensive interventions (an increase of 19 percentage points). Four hundred sixty students received at least 12 hours of interventions, compared to 657 last year[9]. In addition, 794 students received interventions of less duration; the number was reported as 525 last year. Coaches and teachers continued to remain positive about the number of students served and the training of intervention providers, although coaches perceptions declined slightly from last year.

There were a few areas of implementation that showed **slight decreases** from the previous year. These include:

90-minute reading block. With the exception of one school, first-, second-, and third-grade students continued to participate in 90-minute, uninterrupted reading blocks. While all of the kindergarten reading blocks were at

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[9] Number of students served is for the 15 schools who answered these questions both years.

least 90 minutes, one-quarter of them were interrupted. One coach reported a 60-minute, interrupted, reading block for all K-3 students.

Core program. Nearly all of the teachers indicated using the core program at least as much, if not more, than the previous year. However, one-fifth of coaches indicated not using the same core program as last year; it is unknown if new core programs were adopted and the process used in doing so. Regardless, fidelity to the core remained the same, if not stricter. Compared to last year, while a slightly smaller percentage of teachers expressed satisfaction with the core, they sustained their previous year's use of templates.

RLT meetings. Two schools discontinued Reading Leadership Teams; those that continued met slightly more frequently, with the majority (79%) meeting once a month. Teachers' perceptions that their RLT was visible and effective remained about the same.

Finally, there were a few areas of implementation that showed **more substantial decreases.**

Coaching. In schools that had a reading coach, the frequency by which coaches observe and provide feedback has decreased. Since 2006, the percentage of teachers who reported at least monthly observations decreased from 79 percent to 57 percent; those reporting receiving at least monthly feedback decreased from 70 percent to 51 percent. To some extent, coaches confirmed these reports; this year they reported spending 17 percent of their time providing observations, demonstrations, feedback to individual K-3 teachers compared to 23 percent of their time last year.

Professional development for teachers. Regardless of the presence of a coach, teachers continued to report a decline the amount of professional development in reading; their perceptions of its quality remained about the

same as last year. Similar percentages of teachers believed professional development was sustained and intensive and/or focused on what happened in the classroom in both years.

Teachers' use of data. There was a continued drop in the percentage of teachers who examined data at least weekly—from 54 percent in 2006, to 40 percent in 2007, and to 33 percent in 2008. Data use in all other areas (grouping students, identifying students for interventions, communicating with colleagues, and looking at school-wide trends) remained similar to last year.

Prospects for Sustainability

This section looks at areas critical for sustainability. It seeks to ascertain the feasibility of cohort 2's continued implementation of Reading First. Without the benefit of a crystal ball to see into the future of Montana Reading First, this analysis is based on data from the last three years of Montana Reading First and research on the sustainability of reform programs in general. It looks at 2007–2008 survey data from district coordinators, principals, coaches, and teachers; compares the cohorts' last year of implementation with full funding—cohort 2 in 2007–2008 and cohort 1 in 2005–2006; and uses results from cohort 1's two years of implementing Reading First under continuation.

Based on the data, it appears that sustaining Reading First may be slightly more of a challenge for cohort 2 schools than those in cohort 1. At the outset of continuation, support for sustaining the Reading First components was higher in cohort 1 than cohort 2. While it is highly likely that the use of the core program during the 90-minute reading block and DIBELS assessments will continue in almost all of the cohort 2 schools, the frequency of coaching, grade-level and

RLT meetings, professional development, and teachers' use of data will likely decline.

Like the cohort 1 schools, many factors will facilitate the continued implementation of Reading First:

- The state and districts are supportive of Reading First and schools seem to be protected from competing reforms.
- Principal leadership will likely remain stable.
- Principals and coaches continue to display strong support for Reading First.
- Teacher and coach retention is high.
- There is strong support for grade-level meetings, the administration of benchmark and progress-monitoring assessments, and use of data among coaches and teachers.
- Systems are in place to continue providing some reading-related professional development to principals, coaches, and teachers.
- Each year larger proportions of Montana Reading First students meet benchmark.

However, some difference between the cohorts will likely make continuation more difficult among cohort 2 schools: Cohort 2 principals regularly observe teachers and use data with less frequency than those in cohort 1. Among cohort 2 teachers, there is a perception of less distributed leadership, as well as less support for, and more resistance to, Reading First. These may continue to be a challenge that is difficult to overcome if fewer coaches are available to monitor and support Reading First implementation in the classroom and analyze and use data in their schools.

Sustainable Components of Reading First

As stated earlier, the Reading First schools are still expected to maintain most aspects of Reading First while receiving reduced funding; only the coaching position is optional. Cohort 2 district coordinators were the most favorable about the sustainability of the Reading First components, followed by cohort 2 principals, and finally, teachers. Both district coordinators and principals overwhelming agreed that the 90-minute block and the core program would continue to be implemented in the Reading First schools (see Figure 7-1).

The use of the DIBELS assessments and grade-level meetings will most likely be supported in the majority of the schools. Fewer schools would likely continue RLTs and support reading coaches. While district coordinators reported the sustainability of professional development in reading, fewer principals did; it was one it was one of the highest supported areas by teachers.

The following quotes present contrasting principal views on sustainability:

Everything stays the same. Difficult with consumable materials that need to be replaced and funding depends on population, we'll cut back on some things. We'll continue with Reading First school title, DIBELS, contact with state, 90 minutes, interventions, and coach. (Principal)

Prospects are slim for sustainability. Reading coach requires professional development and follow-through; this needs to be adequate. We can continue with less money, but not with none. Funding is needed for assessment, tutoring, coaching, and professional resources. (Principal)

Support for continuing Reading First's components was less strong among teachers. The majority of teachers definitely wanted to continue interventions and grouping. Just half would definitely want continued professional development in reading and use of the core program. When teachers who "definitely" and "probably" would continue the Reading

Figure 7-1
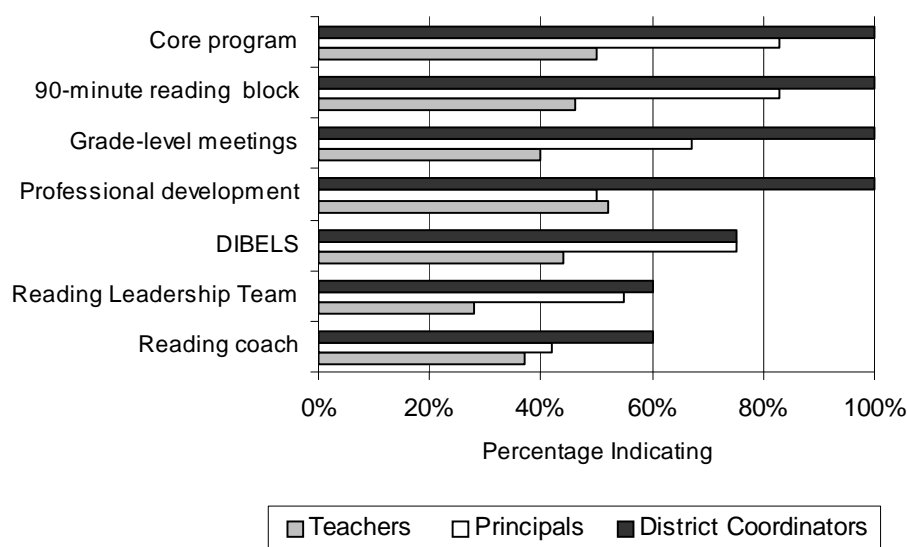
Cohort 2 Staff Members' Perceptions of Reading First Components' Sustainability

First elements were considered together, the majority of teachers supported all of the components.

Cohort 1 principals and teachers in their final year of funding were more optimistic about sustaining all of the components of Reading First than were cohort 2 principals and teachers.

Key Aspects of Sustainability

In a review of the literature on sustainability, Taylor (2005) identified characteristics associated with sustainability:

- Supportive political context and protection from competing reforms
- Leadership stability
- Staff commitment
- Staff member retention
- Practical components structured into daily life
- Sustained professional development
- Positive student outcomes

This final section looks at each of these areas in the context of Montana Reading First. (Table 7-1 in Appendix C reflects a summary of survey results regarding support of Reading First.)

Supportive political context and protection from competing reforms. Currently, support for Reading First at the cohort 2 district level is high. Few programs exist that clash with Reading First; the majority of district coordinators (90%), principals (91%), and coaches (82%) disagreed that major initiatives contradicted, or were not aligned with, Reading First.

Furthermore, the majority of the districts provided substantial support to their Reading First schools during the third year of implementation. As noted in Chapter 4.

Leadership and School-level Structures, this support always included a district coordinator, financial management of the grant, a DIBELS assessment team, analysis of student reading data, and the provision of professional development aligned with Reading First. It frequently included technical assistance and a teacher mentoring/induction program that included an introduction to Reading First. Sixty percent of the district coordinators indicated that their district modified district requirements in order to be aligned with Reading First; however, the extent to which this was necessary *and* did not happen is unknown.

Interviewed principals unanimously reported that the state had addressed sustainability with them. This most frequently included developing a sustainability plan, as described by one principal:

> *With identified improvements and a correction plan; what is working well will stay the same and we will change some of the things that are not working. The teachers are involved. The state reading specialist continues to be available to us. (Principal)*

When asked what additional support would be appreciated from the state, principals most frequently requested continued technical assistance (as reflected in the quote above.).

It appears as though cohort 1 might have received less support from the state in the area of sustainability during its final year of implementation than cohort 2 did. While two-thirds of cohort 1 principals were pleased with the amount of support they received from the state, half of the schools had written a plan to address sustainability. Regardless, over the last two years, cohort 1 principals and district coordinators reported continued district support for Reading First, and principals and coaches continued to receive technical assistance from their state reading specialist.

Montana Reading First expects to provide a similar amount of technical assistance during the 2008–2009 school year as it did in 2007–2008.

Leadership stability. When leadership changes and a new direction is envisioned, years of work can be erased. As noted earlier, during the 2007–2008 school year, cohort 2 principal turnover was low; two-thirds of principals have been at their school since prior to receiving their Reading First grant. In addition to stable leadership, leadership appears to be somewhat distributed—two-thirds of teachers agreed that their RLT was visible and effective; a similar proportion of members agreed that attending those meetings was a good use of their time.

Compared to cohort 2, principal turnover in cohort 1 was higher in its last year of full funding (16%), but an equal proportion of principals had been at their school since prior to receiving their Reading First grant. Slightly higher proportions of teachers agreed that their RLT was visible and effective, and RLT members agreed that attending those meetings was a good use of time.

Staff commitment. One of the most important factors for sustaining reform work is staff commitment and support for reform activities. Data from the evaluation continue to suggest that support is very strong among cohort 2 principals and coaches, but more moderate among teachers. The majority of principals and coaches agreed they were pleased to have a Reading First grant and strongly supported the instructional changes that occurred; about two-thirds of teachers agreed (see figure 7-2).

Coaches and principals who felt that teacher buy-in to Reading First was high, attributed it to student success, having time to implement the program, and their professional development. One principal commented:

> *The teachers can see the program makes a difference. Reading First gives the new teachers a designed program and direction. The data show it is working. (Principal)*

Also cited were the positive impact the book study had on teachers, their increased use of data, and the importance of training new teachers in Reading First prior to starting the school year. All of the interviewed teachers

Figure 7-2

Support for Reading First Instructional Changes
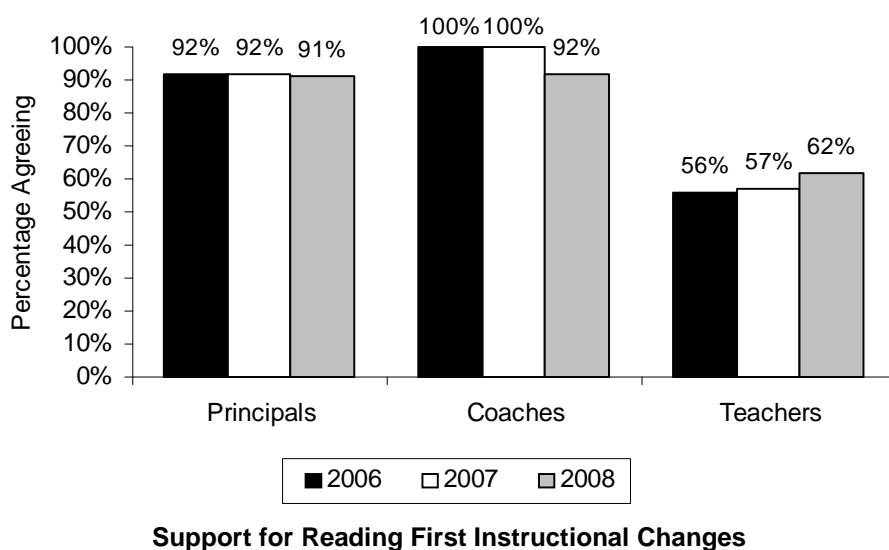
were positive about the impact Reading First had upon them. Their comments echoed those of their principals and coaches:

> *On a scale from 1-10, a 6: I like the professional development and the book studies were great…Data meetings are good; at the end of the year, after DIBELS benchmark tests, we see growth from beginning to end of year, and it re-affirms the program is working. (Teacher)*

Coaches of teachers with lower buy-in attributed it to dissatisfaction with some materials and to time constraints.

Many principals and coaches continue to deal with resistance. They used a variety of strategies for dealing with it, ranging from having open communication, staying true to the vision, modeling and co-teaching to improvement plans, written reprimands, and continuing to let teachers know there were other schools where they could teach.

Support for Reading First was similar for cohort 1 principals and coaches in their third year of implementation. While such support was slightly higher among cohort 1 teachers than cohort 2 teachers in their third year, a smaller proportion of cohort 2 teachers had philosophical or pedagogical objections to Reading First. Larger proportions of cohort 2 principals and coaches were challenged with teacher resistance to Reading First.

Support for Reading First instructional changes was similar for cohort 1 principals, coaches, and teachers in 2008 as it was in 2006.

Staff retention. Schools in which teacher and coach turnover is low do not need to spend a lot of resources and time providing professional development to new staff members who need to learn the reform approach. Overall, cohort 2 teacher and coach retention are high. Ninety percent of cohort 2 coaches, and about three-quarters of the

teachers, have been at their school since the start of Reading First or before. During the 2007–2008 school year, no new coaches were hired in cohort 2 Reading First schools, and two-fifths of principals reported hiring no new teachers during the 2007–2008 school year. However, one-quarter of principals reported at least 20 percent teacher turnover, and fourteen percent of all teachers were new to their school.

Currently, two-thirds of cohort 1 coaches and 60 percent of teachers have been at their school since the start of Reading First or before. In its first year of continuation, no more than 10 percent of coaches and teachers were new to their building. Coach and teacher turnover increased in 2007–2008 (about 20 percent for coaches and teachers)

The majority of cohort 2 district coordinators (60%), but slightly fewer cohort 1 district coordinators (40%), reported that it was difficult to find qualified applicants for the coaching position.

Practical components structured into daily life. When the practical components of a reform effort are structured into the daily life of the school community, reform is more likely to be sustained; the reform becomes how the school "does business." In Reading First, these practical components include grade-level meetings, assessment systems, and the consistent use of data.

Almost all cohort 2 teachers reported attending grade-level meetings regularly, and the majority (76%) felt doing so was a good use of their time. Assessment systems were established in all of the cohort 2 schools; those for benchmark assessments were more entrenched than those for progress monitoring. Use of data for critical tasks was highest and habitual among coaches; it was slightly less so for teachers, and still less for principals. Regardless, the majority of these

staff members regularly used data for many activities.

In its last year of full funding, cohort 1 schools were similarly positioned to those in cohort 2. Similar proportions of cohort 1 and cohort 2 teachers regularly attended grade-level meetings and viewed them similarly. Assessments systems were established in all of the cohort 1 schools; but far fewer K-3 teachers were involved in progress monitoring compared to teachers in cohort 2. Data was used by the majority of staff members for a variety of tasks in all schools in their last year of funding. In 2006, cohort 1 principals appeared to use data the most, followed by their coaches and teachers who used it with similar frequency. Cohort 2 coaches appear to use data more than cohort 1 coaches did and while teachers' use of data was similar, cohort 1 principals' use of data was more frequent than that of cohort 1 principals.

Over the past two years, cohort 1 principal and coach leadership around Reading First has remained strong, with regular data use. Teachers' use of data continues to decline. Classroom observations by coaches have declined in frequency.

Sustained professional development. Staff members who worked at Reading First schools for the past three years have received a substantial amount of professional development in reading. To continue to work collaboratively, new staff members need opportunities to catch up to their experienced colleagues. At the same time, experienced educators benefit from opportunities that keep them abreast of current research and reinforce critical concepts.

As noted earlier, the majority of district coordinators reported the existence of a teacher mentoring/induction program that included an introduction to Reading First. In addition to this training opportunity, most principals indicated that new teachers were

supported in multiple ways at the school level. This support included:

- Participation in training, such as the Montana Reading Institute
- Additional time with the reading coach
- Technical assistance from the state reading specialist
- Mentoring from, and observations of, classrooms of, other teachers

Looking at the experience of cohort 1, principals and coaches continued to be offered frequent professional development and technical assistance opportunities. Such professional development will continue to be offered to principals and coaches in both cohorts and at similar levels during the 2008–2009 school year.

After two years in continuation, teachers continued to report a decline the amount of reading-related professional development they received; about two-fifths considered it to be sustained and intensive; three-fifths considered it to be focused on the classroom. Teachers who were hired after their school entered continuation were more likely to report receiving more professional development in reading than the year before, and that professional development in reading was sustained and intensive—indicating that perhaps these new teachers are getting more attention than their peers.

Positive student outcomes. Positive student outcomes are critical to sustaining reform initiatives, as they provide the rationale for continuing efforts. In both cohorts each year, larger percentages of Montana Reading First students met benchmark, and smaller percentages of students were at intensive. In most grades, a higher proportion of students attained benchmark in cohort 1 than in cohort 2.

CHAPTER EIGHT: RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2008–2009, the cohort 2 schools will enter their fourth year of implementation and their first year with reduced funding. The loss of some coaches, the redistribution of responsibilities, and challenges regarding sustainability may all be confronted, to some extent. The following recommendations are offered for consideration:

Classroom observations and feedback. Cohort 2 principals were likely to observe teachers once a month, but provided feedback less often; coaches observed and provided feedback more frequently. While principal and coach observations are important and should continue to be stressed, other avenues of classroom-based professional development for teachers could be explored. Peer coaching is one such area that will allow teachers to receive professional development in a collaborative environment.

Knowledge Box. Montana Reading First should continue to review and update *Knowledge Box* to ensure the content is aligned with current research, reinforces topics addressed at principal and coach meetings, and remains an efficient means for providing professional development across the state. Staff members at schools may benefit from a review of how to use this resource as key staff members change and professional development responsibilities shift. Furthermore, training all staff members provides them opportunity to access professional development that meets their needs as frequently as needed.

State reading specialists. State reading specialists' visits should continue as this resource is valued by staff members in schools. In some schools, these visits might be increased. Some coaches felt that increased presence of their state reading specialist might improve teachers' perceptions of their role and input. In schools where coaches are no longer present, increased visits, observations, and attendance at meetings might help to ensure that key components of the program are maintained and that as challenges arise they are quickly addressed. State reading specialists should be careful to strike a balance between providing supports and monitoring.

Professional development for principals and coaches. Montana Reading First should continue offering regular professional development opportunities for coaches and principals and strongly encourage their participation. The following topic areas may want to be included: working with teacher resistance, differentiating instruction, and student engagement.

Share the findings on principal trust. The information on principal trust should be used as a means of encouraging principals to regularly observe and providing feedback to teachers and attending grade-level meetings.

As cohort 1 schools enter their sixth year of implementation, Montana Reading First may want to consider decreasing site visits and technical assistance to these schools. In most cases, Reading First sustainability is high and these visits were seen as less useful to staff members last year.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Cohort 2 Principal Survey
Cohort 2 Coach Survey
Cohort 2 Teacher Survey

Cohort 1 Principal Survey
Cohort 1 Coach Survey
Cohort 1 Teacher Survey

Online District Survey

MONTANA READING FIRST
PRINCIPAL SURVEY 2008

Responses were received from 12 principals. Unless otherwise noted, the N for each item is equal or approximate to this number.

SECTION A: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Did you attend any Reading First training held during the summer of 2007?	
17% No	83% Yes

2. Which principal/coach meetings did you attend/do you plan to attend this year? (select all that apply)
   - 83%   September 24-25 in Billings
   - 83%   December 3-4 in Great Falls
   - 67%   February 25-26 with Kevin Feldman in Helena
   - 100%   May 5-6 with Jill Jackson in Helena

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

The professional development that I received at the coach and principal meetings this year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. s very relevant to my work.	-	8%	17%	42%	33%
4. Was mostly review for me.	-	42%	33%	25%	-
5. Consisted of high-quality presentations.	-	8%	8%	59%	25%
6. Provided me with useful training in observing teachers and providing feedback.	-	16%	25%	42%	17%
7. Provided me with useful tools for working with resistant staff.	9%	27%	18%	37%	9%
8. Met my specific needs as a Reading First principal.	-	25%	17%	33%	25%
9. Included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with my colleagues.	-	8%	17%	67%	8%
10. Was differentiated (tailored) to meet the needs of different groups, based on their level of pre-existing expertise.	-	25%	50%	8%	17%

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11.	The <u>quality</u> of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	-	-	17%	50%	33%
12.	The <u>amount</u> of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	-	17%	17%	50%	16%
13.	If you were not pleased with the amount, was there too much or too little?	8% Too much			- Too little	

14. This year, how often did you watch or use training materials from *Knowledge Box*?

32%	Never	9%	2-3 times a month
50%	Once or a few times a year	-	1-3 times a week
9%	Once a month	-	Daily

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
15.	Knowledge Box has provided important professional development to our school this year.	-	25%	25%	42%	8%
16.	Knowledge Box is an effective vehicle for the delivery of Reading First training and materials.	-	33%	25%	42%	-

SECTION B: USE OF DATA

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements and indicate whether or not you would like more training.

I am very confident in my *personal* ability to <u>use data</u> to…		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	**I would like more training in this area (check if yes)**
17.	Identify professional development needs in reading.	-	-	8%	75%	17%	8%
18.	Lead teachers in discussions.	-	-	8%	67%	25%	8%
19.	Make staff assignments (teachers and paras).	-	-	18%	55%	27%	0%
20.	Identify teacher strengths and weaknesses.	-	-	16%	42%	42%	17%
21.	Understand student achievement trends across our school.	-	-	9%	64%	27%	17%

The section below asks how frequently you use reading assessment data when performing specific aspects of your job. If a question asks about an activity that you do not perform, please select the last option, "I don't do that."

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
22. Communicating with teachers about their students.	-	-	17%	58%	25%	-
23. Communicating with teachers about their instruction.	-	-	42%	50%	8%	-
24. Making decisions about student grouping.	9%	9%	9%	9%	64%	8%
25. Making decisions about matching students to the appropriate interventions.	-	9%	9%	27%	55%	8%
26. Looking at schoolwide (K-3) trends.	-	-	8%	50%	42%	-

SECTION C: READING LEADERSHIP TEAM

27. Are you a member of the Reading Leadership Team (RLT) at your school?

90% Yes	- No	10% There is no RLT at our school

28. This year, how often did you attend RLT meetings?
   - Never
   - Seldom
   - Sometimes
   - 22% Often
   - 78% Always
   - There is no such team at our school

SECTION D: YOUR VIEWS ON READING FIRST

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below. If a question is not applicable, please leave it blank.

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
29. I am very comfortable observing teachers and providing constructive feedback.	-	-	-	64%	36%
30. I feel that Reading First puts excessive emphasis on the involvement of the principal in instructional matters.	30%	20%	10%	40%	-
31. Reading First would not run smoothly without the Reading Leadership Team.	-	-	27%	64%	9%
32. Major initiatives in our district contradict or are not aligned with Reading First.	64%	27%	9%	-	-
33. I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First.	-	-	9%	36%	55%
34. Our district provides sufficient support for Reading First.	9%	9%	-	64%	18%

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
35. Overcoming teacher resistance to Reading First has been a challenge for me.	18%	36%	-	37%	9%
36. I have significant philosophical or pedagogical objections to the approach of Reading First.	27%	55%	9%	9%	-
37. I am pleased that our school has a Reading First grant.	-	-	-	27%	73%
38. In my view, Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS results.	27%	55%	9%	-	9%
39. I think that the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	-	9%	9%	64%	18%
40. Our school has a collaborative culture.	9%		-	73%-	18%
41. Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	-	-	18%	46%	36%
42. Attending Reading Leadership Team meetings is a good use of my time.	-	-	17%	50%	33%
43. Attending reading study groups is a good use of my time.	-	8%	33%	34%	25%
44. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	-	8%	8%	42%	42%
45. Our Reading First program is doing an excellent job meeting the needs of our American Indian students.	-	8%	17%	42%	33%
46. I believe that Reading First can close the achievement gap between American Indian and white students.	-	-	25%	50%	25%
47. I believe that reading instruction at our school has improved noticeably.	-	-	-	42%	58%
48. Our staffing resources are sufficient to provide interventions to all students who need them.	-	8%	8%	67%	17%
49. My school does an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	-	8%	-	75%	17%
50. Instruction in other subjects has suffered because of all of the focus on Reading First.	-	33%	8%	42%	17%
51. State project staff (directors, State Reading Specialists) are responsive to our school's needs.	-	25%	-	33%	42%
52. The State Reading Specialist's support and input has been extremely valuable.	-	8%	8%	34%	50%
53. I trust our State Reading Specialist with any information – good or bad – about our reading program.	-	-	17%	33%	50%
54. Our State Reading Specialist understands our school, our programs and culture, and takes that into account when making recommendations.	-	16%	-	42%	42%
55. We receive conflicting messages about reading from our district and state Reading First staff (directors, State Reading Specialist).	25%	58%	8%	9%	-
56. I believe that all of the instructional changes we made under Reading First will be sustained after the grant is over.	-	-	8%	50%	42%

SECTION F: SUSTAINABILITY

		After grant funding ends, will the following Reading First components be continued at your school?			
		Definitely	Likely	Not Likely	Don't Know
57.	90-minute reading block	83%	17%	-	-
58.	Reading Leadership Team	55%	36%	9%	-
59.	Grade-level meetings	67%	33%	-	-
60.	Core program	83%	17%	-	-
61.	DIBELS	75%	17%	8%	-
62.	Reading coach	42%	33%	17%	8%
63.	Professional development in reading	50%	42%	8%	-

SECTION G: PRINCIPAL & SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

64. How many K-3 classroom teachers do you have in your building?
    Range 1-20; Average 10

65. This year, how many of those teachers were new to your building?
    Range 0-4; Average 1

66. How many total years of principal experience do you have (including this year)?
    Range 2-18; Average 9

67. How many years have you been the principal at this school (including this year?
    Range 1-13; Average 5

68. Did your school make AYP in 2006-2007?
    78% Yes
    11% No, because of <u>both</u> math and reading scores
    -    No, because of reading score
    -    No, because of math score
    11% No, because of other reasons (attendance, behavior, etc.)

69. At which school do you work? *Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.*

    Box Elder
    Dodson
    East Evergreen
    East Glacier Park
    Frazer
    Harlem
    Heart Butte
    Lakeside
    Morningside
    Rocky Boy
    Stevensville
    West-Butte

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

MONTANA READING FIRST
COACH SURVEY 2008

Responses were received from 12 coaches. Unless otherwise noted, the N for each item is equal or approximate to this number.

SECTION A: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1(a). Did you attend any Reading First training held during the summer of 2007?

8% No	92% Yes

1(b). Did you attend training with Frances Bessellieu in January 2008?

83% No	17% Yes

1(c). Did you attend training with Kevin Feldman in February 2008?

8% No	92% Yes

1(d). Do you plan on attending training with Jill Jackson in May 2008?

- No	100% Yes

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

The professional development that I received at the coach and principal meetings this year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. was very relevant to my work.	-	-	-	67%	33%
3. was mostly review for me.	-	50%	25%	17%	8%
4. consisted of high-quality presentations.	-	-	-	83%	17%
5. provided me with useful training in coaching methods.	-	8%	17%	50%	25%
6. provided me with useful tools for working with resistant staff.	-	42%	25%	33%	-
7. included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with my colleagues.	-	8%	17%	50%	25%
8. met my specific needs as a Reading First coach.	-	8%	17%	67%	8%
9. was differentiated (tailored) to meet the needs of different groups, based on their level of pre-existing expertise.	-	17%	41%	42%	-

I am very pleased with…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10. the quality of coaching training that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	-	-	8%	59%	33%
11. the amount of coaching training that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	-	8%	8%	59%	25%
12. If you were not pleased, was there too much or too little?	- Too much			100% Too little	

13. Looking ahead to <u>next year</u> (2008-2009), in which area(s) do **you as coach** need additional training:
    (select all that apply)

17%	Coaching methods	-	Using templates
33%	Developing rapport and buy-in with staff	50%	Intervention programs
50%	Working with resistance, conflict resolution	25%	Working with American Indian students
25%	Lesson modeling	33%	Student engagement
8%	Classroom observations	8%	Strategies to teach the five components
33%	Providing constructive feedback	58%	Differentiated instruction (i.e. instruction
33%	Training new staff		tailored to individual students' needs)
33%	Meeting facilitation	8%	Administering and scoring assessments
25%	Budgeting	8%	Interpreting and using assessment results
17%	Using the core program	17%	Other:

This year, how many visits did your school receive from:							This number of visits was:		
	0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5 +**	**Too much**	**Too little**	**Just right**
14. State Reading Specialist	-	-	-	8%	25%	67%	-	18%	82%
15. District reading staff	67%	17%	-	-	8%	8%	-	20%	80%

This year, how helpful were visits from:	Not at all helpful	Somewhat helpful	Helpful	Very helpful	Did Not Take Place
16. State Reading Specialist	-	-	42%	58%	**-**
17. District reading staff	-	-	50%	50%	**80%**

18. On a typical site visit this year, what activities does your State Reading Specialist engage in? (select all that apply)

42%	Models lessons for the benefit of teachers
8%	Models coaching for my benefit
92%	Participates in observations/walk-throughs with me
50%	Provides professional development to teaching staff
33%	Assists me in preparing professional development for staff
67%	Provides technical assistance to principal, myself and/or Reading Leadership Team
58%	Shares information from national/regional/state Reading First-related training and meetings
75%	Reviews documentation
92%	Reviews assessment data
42%	Reviews budgetary data
100%	Meets with me and/or principal
75%	Meets individually with teachers
42%	Attends grade-level meetings
-	Attends reading study groups
33%	Attends Reading Leadership Team meetings
83%	Shares materials
100%	Reviews Reading Improvement Plan/Action Plan
67%	Completes the Reading Improvement Plan checklist
8%	Provides Knowledge Box/AIMSweb technical assistance
8%	Other

19. This year, how often did you watch or use training materials from Knowledge Box?

8%	Never	9%	2-3 times a month
50%	Once or a few times a year	-	1-3 times a week
33%	Once a month	-	Daily

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
20. *Knowledge Box* has provided important professional development to our school this year.	8%	42%	17%	25%	8%
21. *Knowledge Box* is an effective vehicle for the delivery of Reading First training and materials.	8%	-	33%	42%	17%
22. *Overcoming Dyslexia* was an engaging topic for our school's reading study group this year.	-	8%	-	42%	50%

SECTION B: DATA AND ASSESSMENTS

23. Who <u>regularly</u> administers the K-3 DIBELS <u>progress-monitoring</u> assessments to students at your school? *(check all that apply)*

58% I do (coach)	92% K-3 teachers
- Principal	33% 4th-6th-grade teachers
8% Paraprofessionals	- District staff
17% Specialists (Title I, Special Ed, etc.)	- Other: _____

24. Who <u>regularly</u> administers the K-3 DIBELS <u>benchmark</u> assessments to students at your school? *(check all that apply)*

100% I do (coach)	- K-3 teachers
- Principal	- 4th-6th grade teachers
33% Paraprofessionals	17% District staff
33% Specialists (Title I, Special Ed, etc.)	8% Other: _____

On average, how often are students in each of the following groups progress monitored at your school?	**Weekly**	**Every 2 weeks**	**Every 3 weeks**	**Every 4 weeks**	**Every 5 to 6 weeks**	**Every 7 weeks or less often**	**Never**
25. Benchmark	-	-	-	33%	17%	42%	8%
26. Strategic	8%	33%	17%	42%	-	-	-
27. Intensive	33%	67%	-	-	-	-	-

The section below asks about how frequently you use reading assessment data when performing specific aspects of your job. If a question asks about an activity that you do not perform, please select the last option, "I don't do that."

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
28. Communicating with teachers about their students.	-	-	-	58%	42%	-
29. Communicating with teachers about their instruction.	-	-	50%	33%	17%	-
30. Making decisions about student grouping.	-	8%	8%	9%	75%	-
31. Modifying lessons from the core program.	-	10%	50%	30%	10%	17%
32. Identifying which students need interventions.	-	-	-	8%	92%	-
33. Matching struggling students to the correct intervention for their needs.	-	-	-	25%	75%	-
34. Monitoring student progress in interventions.	-	-	-	17%	83%	-
35. Helping teachers tailor instruction to individual student needs (i.e. differentiated instruction).	-	-	17%	42%	41%	-
36. Looking at schoolwide (K-3) trends.	-	-	-	17%	83%	-

SECTION C: READING LEADERSHIP TEAM AND STUDY GROUPS

37. Who is on the Reading Leadership Team (RLT)? *(select all that apply)*

92% I am (coach)	92% Grade 1 teacher(s)
92% Principal	92% Grade 2 teacher(s)
59% Special education teacher(s)	92% Grade 3 teacher(s)
33% Title I teacher(s)	67% Grade 4-6 teacher(s)
17% Parent(s)	- District representative(s)
25% Paraprofessional(s)	- Other: _____
92% K teacher(s)	8% We don't have a RLT (skip to section D)

38. Which of the following are **typical** topics at your RLT meetings? *(select as many as apply)*

    83% Schoolwide reading assessment data
    67% Student-level reading assessment data
    33% Reading research
    50% Reading materials to use or purchase
    25% Modifications to the core program
    8% Templates and/or lesson maps
    25% Student behavior/discipline
    42% Special events (e.g., family literacy day)
    58% Instructional strategies
    67% Interventions
    75% Information from state Reading First meetings
    83% Scheduling
    67% Grouping
    25% Problem solving for individual students
    8% Topics not related to reading
    67% Sustainability of Reading First (what will happen when funds are gone)
    -   Other _____

39. This year, how often does your school have RLT meetings, on average? *(select one)*

-	Never
18%	Once or a few times a year
27%	Every other month
28%	Once a month
9%	Every other week
18%	Once a week or more

40. How many reading study groups has your school held this year?

- None	17% 1-2	33% 3-4	42% 5-6	8% 7 or more

SECTION D: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

In previous years, the evaluation has found that many coaches work very long hours and carry a wide range of responsibilities. This year, we are asking in more detail about the amount of time you spend on different activities, in order to track overall patterns and make recommendations about task allocations. As always, no individual responses are reported; only overall summaries and trends are provided in the report.

For the following two questions, please round to the nearest hour: up for 30 minutes or more, down for 29 minutes or less.

41. As a reading coach, how many hours a week do you work at this job, on average?
> Range 40-64 Average 48 hr/wk

42. On average, how many hours per week do you spend on the following tasks?

Coordinating or administering reading assessments
> Range 0-11%   Average 6%

Managing data (entering data, creating charts, etc.)
> Range 2-18%   Average 6%

Reviewing and using reading assessment data
> Range 2-11%   Average 6%

Attending professional development or state-level meetings
> Range 2-9%   Average 5%

Planning for and attending Reading Leadership Team and grade-level meetings
> Range 2-22% Average 9%

Training groups of teachers in grades K-3
> Range 2-12%   Average 6%

Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades K-3
> Range 4-38%   Average 19%

Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades 4-6
> Range 0-15% Average 5%

Training groups of teachers in grades 4-6
> Range 0-4%   Average 2%

Planning interventions
> Range 2-22% Average 9%

Providing interventions directly to students
> Range 0-38%   Average 13%

Covering or subbing for teachers
> Range 2-13%   Average 4%

Paperwork (not including assessment/data management)
> Range 0-16%   Average 9%

Bus/recess duty
> Range 0-11%   Average 2%

Other: Range 0-7%   Average 1%

SECTION E: INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTIONS

Please indicate the number of minutes (do not round).

Grade	How many minutes long is the reading block?	How many minutes of the block, on average, are taught at students' grade level?	How many minutes of the block, on average, are taught at students' individual instructional level?	Are at least 90 minutes uninterrupted?
43. Half-day Kindergarten	Range 60-90 Average 75	-	-	33% Yes 67% No
44. Full-day Kindergarten	Range 60-120 Average 91	-	-	70% Yes 30% No
45. First	Range 90-122 Average 95	-	-	100% Yes - No
46. Second	Range 90-122 Average 95	-	-	92% Yes 8% No
47. Third	Range 90-120 Average 95	-	-	92% Yes 8% No

48. Does your school use walk-to-read (students walk to another teacher for reading instruction) during the 90-minute block?

     30% Yes, in all or nearly all classes

     50% Yes, in some grades or classes but not all

     20% No, not at all

The following series of questions refer to the interventions your school provides to students outside of the reading block.

49. How many students will have received **intensive interventions** this year (from August or September 2007 to June 2008)?

     "Intensive interventions" occur outside the reading block, <u>at least two hours per week for at least six weeks</u>. Count any individual student only once, even if he/she has received interventions for more than one session or term. If you do not have exact numbers, please provide the best estimate that you can.

Range 0-300 Average 59%

50. How many other students (not counted in the previous question) will have received **less intensive interventions** (outside the reading block, less than two hours per week and/or less than six weeks)?

Range 0-200 Average 31%

To what percentage of students in each DIBELS grouping is your school able to provide interventions?

	<20%	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	80-99%	100%
51. Intensive	-	-	-	-	18%	82%
52. Strategic	9%	9%	-	9%	9%	64%

53. If fewer than 100 percent of eligible students receive interventions, what are the primary obstacles your school faces? (check all that apply):

    50%   Insufficient staffing
    8%   Lack of trained staff
    8%   Student transportation/bussing (limits before/after school options)
    8%   Available space in the building
    -    Teacher resistance
    -    Lack of parental support
    8%   Other _____

54. Who <u>regularly</u> provides interventions at your school? *(check all that apply)*

50% I do (coach)	33% 4th-6th grade teachers
83% Paraprofessionals	17% Volunteers
50% Specialists (Interventionist, Literacy Facilitator, etc.)	25% Paid tutors
67% K-3 teachers	8% Other: _____

55. What is the largest number of **intensive** students that work at one time with an intervention provider? **Range 3-8 Average 5**

SECTION F: YOUR VIEWS ON READING FIRST

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below. If a question is not applicable, please leave it blank.

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
56. My role as the reading coach is clearly defined.	-	16%	-	67%	17%
57. Most teachers at our school understand the role of the reading coach.	-	8%	8%	84%	-
58. I am very comfortable observing teachers and providing constructive feedback.	-	8%	25%	58%	9%
59. Reading First would not run smoothly without the Reading Leadership Team.	-	17%	33%	42%	8%
60. Major initiatives (programs or grants) in our district contradict or are not aligned with Reading First.	18	64%	9%	9%	-
61. I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First.	-	-	8	25%	67%
62. Overcoming teacher resistance to Reading First has been a challenge for me.	-	25%	-	25%	50%
63. I have significant philosophical or pedagogical objections to the approach of Reading First.	42	50%	8%	-	-
64. In my view, Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS results.	8	58%	34%	-	-
65. I think that the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	-	-	-	83%	17%

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
66. I am fully confident that before each benchmark testing period, all members of our assessment team thoroughly understand the administration and scoring of the DIBELS.	-	-	-	50%	50%
67. Our school has an organized system for <u>administering</u> Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS).	-	-	-	42%	58%
68. Our school has an organized system for <u>analyzing and sharing</u> Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS) with teachers.	-	-	-	50%	50%
69. Our school has an organized system for reviewing reading assessment data that have been <u>disaggregated</u> (split up) by key demographic variables (i.e. race/ethnicity or free/reduced-price lunch).	-	18%	18%	55%	9%
70. I am pleased that our school has a Reading First grant.	-	-	-	42%	58%
71. Our school has a collaborative culture.	8%	8%	25%	50%	9%
72. Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	8%	-	-	50%	42%
73. Attending Reading Leadership Team meetings is a good use of my time.	-	-	25	33%	42%
74. Attending reading study groups is a good use of my time.	-	-	-	33%	67%
75. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	-	-	8	67%	25%
76. I believe that reading instruction at our school has improved noticeably.	-	-	-	33%	67%
77. Our Reading First program is doing an excellent job meeting the needs of our American Indian students.	-	-	25%	42%	33%
78. I believe that Reading First can close the achievement gap between American Indian and white students.	-	8%	25%	42%	25%
79. Our school uses reading materials that are well-matched to the needs of our American Indian students in reading.	-	-	33%	50%	17%
80. Teachers at my school are equipped to meet the needs of our American Indian students in reading.	-	8%	17%	58%	17%
81. The intervention materials we use are well-matched to the needs of our struggling readers.	-	-	17%	50%	33%
82. Our school's intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	-	8%	17%	67%	8%
83. Our school does an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	-	8%	42%	33%	17%
84. Instruction in other subjects has suffered because of all of the focus on Reading First.	-	42%	25%	33%	-
85. State project Reading First staff (director, State Reading Specialists) are responsive to my school's needs.	-	8%	17%	50%	25%
86. The State Reading Specialist's support and input has been extremely valuable.	-	-	-	75%	25%

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
87. I trust our State Reading Specialist with any information – good or bad – about our reading program.	-	-	-	58%	42%
88. Our State Reading Specialist understands our school, our programs and culture, and takes that into account when making recommendations.	-	-	-	67%	33%
89. I believe that all of the instructional changes we made under Reading First will be sustained after the grant is over.	8%	17%	8%	59%	8%

SECTION H: DEMOGRAPHICS

90. What is your current position?
    18%   Part-time reading coach
    85%   Full-time reading coach

91. Is there another reading coach at your school?
    9% Yes   91% No

92. If yes, does this reading coach also work with K-3 reading teachers?
    50% Yes   50% No

93. How many total years of coaching experience do you have (including this year)?
    Range 2-7   Average 4

94. How many years have you been the reading coach at this school (including this year)?
    Range 2-7   Average 3

95. How many years have you worked at this school (in any capacity, including this year)?
    Range 3-20   Average 7

96. How many years of teaching experience do you have (prior to becoming a coach)?
    Range 2-33   Average 14

97. What are your educational credentials? (select as many as apply)
    83%   Bachelor's degree
    33%   Traditional Certification
    50%   Reading certification

        Master's degree

        33%   In reading
        25%   In area of education other than reading
        -           In discipline other than education

    -   Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)

98. At which school do you work? *Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.*

1	Box Elder
1	Dodson
1	East Evergreen
1	East Glacier Park
1	Frazer
1	Harlem
1	Heart Butte
1	Lakeside
1	Morningside
1	Rocky Boy
1	Stevensville
1	West-Butte

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

**MONTANA READING FIRST
TEACHER SURVEY 2008**

Responses were received from 123 teachers. Unless otherwise noted, the N for each item is equal or approximate to this number.

SECTION A: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Did you attend any Reading First training held during the summer of 2007?	
16% No	84% Yes

Thinking back over this school year, please indicate how helpful you feel that the various forms of Reading First professional development were for you, personally.

Over the 2007-2008 school year, how helpful was/were:	Never Helpful	Rarely Helpful	Sometimes Helpful	Usually Helpful	Always Helpful	Did Not Take Place
2. Training in the core program from the publisher?	-	4%	26%	53%	17%	**61%**
3. Demonstration lessons provided by your reading coach?	-	2%	22%	33%	43%	**25%**
4. Feedback on your instruction provided by the <u>coach</u> after observation of your classroom?	1%	5%	18%	35%	41%	**12%**
5. Feedback on your instruction provided by the <u>principal</u> after observation of your classroom?	3%	11%	18%	37%	31%	**24%**
6. Assistance from the coach in administering and scoring student assessments?	1%	2%	16%	21%	60%	**9%**
7. Assistance from the coach in interpreting assessment results?	1%	4%	14%	27%	54%	**3%**
8. Assistance from the coach in providing quality interventions?	1%	8%	15%	41%	35%	**4%**
9. Assistance from the coach in monitoring the effectiveness of interventions?	2%	9%	28%	29%	32%	**6%**
10. Attending study groups about reading?	2%	7%	27%	43%	21%	**3%**
11. Training segments that you watched on *Knowledge Box*?	-	13%	38%	33%	16%	**33%**

12. This year, the frequency of classroom visits from the coach was…

8% Too frequent	73% Just right	19% Not frequent enough

13. Looking ahead to next year (2008-2009), in which area(s) do you need additional training: *(select all that apply)*

6%	Phonemic awareness	7%	Using templates
3%	Phonics	3%	Using the core program
10%	Fluency	24%	Using supplemental programs
15%	Vocabulary	31%	Using intervention programs
33%	Comprehension	7%	Administering and scoring assessments
37%	Student engagement	11%	Interpreting assessment results
16%	Working with American Indian students	20%	Using assessment results to drive instruction
55%	Differentiated instruction (tailoring instruction to individual students' needs)	4%	Other: _____

SECTION B: STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements and indicate whether or not you would like more training.

I am very confident in my *personal* ability to…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	I would like more training in this area (check if yes)
14. Administer progress-monitoring assessments.	-	2%	8%	35%	55%	4%
15. Diagnose a student's specific reading needs using reading-assessment data.	-	7%	10%	56%	27%	15%
16. Use data to group students.	-	3%	7%	41%	49%	3%
17. Use data to plan small-group instruction.	-	4%	4%	55%	37%	11%
18. Understand student-achievement trends across our school.	-	6%	23%	46%	25%	7%

The section below asks how frequently you use reading assessment data when performing specific aspects of your job. If a question asks about an activity that you do not perform, please select the last option, "I don't do that."

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
19. Grouping students into small instructional groups within my classroom.	-	3%	9%	46%	42%	12%
20. Communicating with colleagues about reading instruction and student needs.	-	2%	17%	35%	46%	5%
21. Looking at schoolwide (K-3) trends.	-	3%	22%	35%	40%	7%
22. Modifying lessons from the core program.	3%	10%	19%	39%	29%	12%
23. Identifying which students need interventions.	-	2%	6%	25%	67%	2%
24. Matching struggling students to the correct intervention for their needs.	-	3%	8%	44%	45%	7%
25. Monitoring student progress in interventions.	1%	2%	7%	37%	53%	3%

26. This year, how much of the progress monitoring of your reading students did you conduct yourself?
    44%   All
    35%   Most
    14%   Some
    7%   None

SECTION C: THE READING FIRST CLASSROOM

27. Which best describes the group of students you usually have in your classroom during the reading block:

52% Homogeneous – students are mostly at about the same level and have similar instructional needs.	48% Heterogeneous – students are at a wide variety of levels and have differing instructional needs.

28. On a typical day, how many students are in your classroom during the reading block?
    Range 4-26   Average 15

Please indicate the frequency with which the following activities took place during this school year (2007-2008).

This year, how often did…	Never	Once or a few times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	1-3 times a week	Daily
29. The principal visit your classroom during the reading block (for a quick walk-through or a longer observation)?	-	26%	22%	30%	17%	5%
30. The principal provide you with feedback on your instruction?	18%	48%	11%	15%	6%	2%
31. The reading coach observe your classroom during the reading block?	2%	12%	21%	24%	32%	9%
32. The reading coach provide you with feedback on your instruction?	11%	18%	25%	23%	21%	2%
33. Another teacher observe your classroom during the reading block?	63%	33%	1%	-	1%	2%
34. You observe another teacher's reading lesson?	79%	17%	1%	1%	-	2%
35. Paraprofessionals work with you during the reading block?	51%	3%	1%	3%	6%	36%
36. You look at reading assessment data?	-	3%	15%	42%	32%	8%
37. Your grade-level team meet?	1%	2%	12%	34%	49%	2%
38. You need to use the reading block to work on non-reading instruction or tasks? (i.e. Writing, science, math, field trips, administrative tasks)?	78%	15%	3%	1%	2%	1%
39. You differentiate instruction (tailor instruction to individual students' needs) during the 90-minute reading block?	19%	12%	3%	9%	21%	36%
40. You use small-group instruction during the reading block?	28%	5%	1%	8%	11%	47%
41. You attend a reading study group?	6%	24%	45%	18%	6%	1%
42. You watch or use materials from Knowledge Box?	17%	39%	11%	15%	11%	7%

SECTION D: MEETINGS AND COLLABORATION

43. How do you prepare your reading lessons?
    - 6% Always in collaboration with other classroom teachers
    - 16% Often in collaboration with other classroom teachers
    - 10% About half the time in collaboration with other classroom teachers and half the time on my own
    - 32% Often on my own
    - 36% Always on my own

44. This year, how often did <u>the principal</u> attend your grade-level meetings?
     - 8%   Never
     - 17%   Seldom
     - 25%   Sometimes
     - 30%   Usually
     - 20%   Always

45. This year, how often did <u>the coach</u> attend your grade-level meetings?
     - 5%   Never
     - 4%   Seldom
     - 11%   Sometimes
     - 12%   Usually
     - 68%   Always

46. This year, how often did <u>you</u> attend your grade-level meetings?
     - -   Never
     - 1%   Seldom
     - 1%   Sometimes
     - 16%   Usually
     - 82%   Always

47. Which of the following are **typical** topics at your <u>grade-level</u> meetings? *(select as many as apply)*
     - 36%   Schoolwide reading assessment data
     - 85%   Student-level reading assessment data
     - 21%   Reading research
     - 32%   Reading materials to use or purchase
     - 35%   Modifications to the core program
     - 33%   Templates and/or lesson maps
     - 43%   Student behavior/discipline
     - 16%   Special events (e.g., family literacy day)
     - 63%   Instructional strategies
     - 72%   Interventions
     - 28%   Information from state Reading First meetings
     - 33%   Scheduling
     - 63%   Grouping
     - 63%   Problem solving for individual students
     - 18%   Topics not related to reading
     - 24%   Sustainability of Reading First (what will happen when funds are gone)
     - 3%   Other _____

48. Are you a member of the Reading Leadership Team (RLT) at your school?

57% Yes	32% No	12% There is no RLT at my school

SECTION E: YOUR VIEWS ON READING FIRST

The following statements present a range of opinions about different components of Reading First. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. If a question is not applicable, please leave it blank.

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
49. Our school has a visible and effective Reading Leadership Team.	4%	11%	23%	45%	17%
50. Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	1%	7%	16%	59%	17%
51. Attending Reading Leadership Team meetings is a good use of my time.	3%	10%	22%	44%	21%
52. Attending reading study groups is a good use of my time.	3%	13%	25%	48%	11%
53. Attending Reading First training during the summer is a good use of my time.	3%	7%	15%	53%	22%
54. Overall, the professional development I received through Reading First was ongoing and intensive.	6%	14%	23%	45%	12%
55. Overall, the professional development I received through Reading First focused on what happens in the classroom.	3%	10%	15%	61%	11%
56. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	3%	7%	13%	52%	25%
57. The instructional strategies promoted under Reading First are very similar to my pre-service program training.	9%	19%	27%	40%	5%
58. I believe that reading instruction at our school has improved noticeably.	1%	5%	12%	41%	41%
59. I think the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	2%	14%	23%	46%	15%
60. Our school has an organized system for administering Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS).	1%	-	5%	58%	36%
61. Our school has an organized system for analyzing and sharing the results of Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS) with teachers.	1%	5%	6%	58%	30%
62. I have seen our school's reading assessment data disaggregated (split up) by key demographic variables (i.e. race/ethnicity or free/reduced-price lunch).	12%	27%	24%	25%	12%
63. Reading First has significantly changed the way I teach reading.	1%	3%	12%	43%	41%
64. The intervention materials we use are well-matched to the needs of our struggling readers.	2%	13%	22%	51%	12%
65. Our school's intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	2%	12%	16%	53%	17%
66. Our school does an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	2%	12%	19%	52%	15%
67. I have significant philosophical or pedagogical objections to the approach of Reading First.	20%	37%	30%	9%	4%
68. Our school has a collaborative culture.	1%	11%	25%	50%	13%

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
69. Teachers in this school trust each other.	6%	13%	26%	44%	11%
70. It's okay in this school to discuss feelings, worries, and frustrations with other teachers.	7%	16%	20%	47%	10%
71. Teachers respect other teachers who take the lead in school improvement efforts.	7%	12%	26%	48%	7%
72. Teachers at this school respect those colleagues who are experts at their craft.	6%	10%	20%	52%	12%
73. Teachers at this school really care about each other.	3%	9%	22%	47%	19%
74. The principal takes an interest in the professional development of teachers.	2%	13%	20%	45%	20%
75. The principal communicates a clear vision for our school.	7%	16%	27%	32%	18%
76. The principal makes clear to the staff his or her expectations for meeting instructional goals.	5%	14%	22%	37%	22%
77. The principal carefully tracks student academic progress.	4%	16%	27%	40%	13%
78. In my view, Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS results.	4%	20%	33%	30%	13%
79. Our reading coach is a knowledgeable resource about reading research and practices.	2%	4%	8%	48%	38%
80. Even when providing critical feedback, I feel our reading coach is an ally in helping me to improve my instruction.	6%	7%	10%	45%	32%
81. Our reading coach has helped me become more reflective about my teaching practice.	6%	10%	18%	41%	25%
82. Our reading coach has increased my understanding of how children learn to read.	5%	10%	23%	42%	20%
83. I am pleased that our school has a Reading First grant.	5%	2%	26%	37%	30%
84. I feel that I have a voice in our school's decisionmaking about Reading First.	15%	26%	25%	24%	10%
85. Instruction in other subjects has suffered because of all of the focus on Reading First.	5%	12%	17%	38%	28%
86. I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First.	2%	11%	25%	51%	11%
87. Our Reading First program is doing an excellent job meeting the needs of our American Indian students.	3%	8%	46%	34%	9%
88. I believe that Reading First can close the achievement gap between American Indian and white students.	2%	12%	48%	31%	7%
89. Our school uses reading materials that are well-matched to the needs of our American Indian students in reading.	6%	9%	51%	27%	7%
90. I feel equipped to meet the needs of my American Indian students during reading instruction.	3%	9%	36%	44%	8%
91. When our school no longer has Reading First funding, I think that I will to go back to more or less the way I was teaching reading before.	27%	47%	17%	7%	2%

SECTION G: SUSTAINABILITY

	In your opinion, once your school no longer has the Reading First grant, which of the following program components would you like to see continue?			
	Definitely not	Probably not	Probably yes	Definitely yes
92. Core program	1%	6%	43%	50%
93. 90-minute reading block	3%	12%	39%	46%
94. DIBELS	3%	10%	43%	44%
95. Reading coach	10%	27%	26%	37%
96. Ongoing professional development in reading	-	4%	44%	52%
97. Grouping	-	2%	35%	63%
98. Interventions	-	5%	29%	66%
99. Grade-level meetings	-	7%	53%	40%
100. Reading Leadership Team	5%	23%	44%	28%

SECTION H: DEMOGRAPHICS

101. What is your primary teaching role this year? *(select one)*
    <u>88%</u>   Regular classroom teacher
      -   Specialist (select one)
         -   Speech/language
         <u>6%</u> Language arts/reading (e.g., Title I, reading specialist)
         -   Library
         <u>6%</u> Special education
         -   ESL/bilingual
      -   Paraprofessional
      -   I do not work directly with students

102. This year, which grade(s) do you teach <u>during the reading block</u>? For example, you might teach first- and second-grade students. (select all that apply).

24% Grade K	29% Grade 1	29% Grade 2	28% Grade 3	7% Other

    -   I do not provide direct classroom instruction during the reading block.

103. This year, what is the grade level of the material you teach from <u>during the reading block</u>? (select all that apply.) For example, you might teach using the second-grade Open Court materials.

24% Grade K	29% Grade 1	32% Grade 2	25% Grade 3	6% Other

    1%   I do not provide direct classroom instruction during the reading block.

104. How many years teaching experience do you have? Range 1-38 Average 13

105. How many years have you worked at this school? Range 1-34 Average 9

106. What are your educational credentials? *(select as many as apply)*
    83%   Bachelor's degree
    14%   Traditional teacher certification
    -      Emergency teacher certification
    17%   Reading certification
          Master's degree
      8%   In reading
    24%   In area of education other than reading
    1%   In discipline other than education
    -      Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)

107. At which school do you work?   *Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.*

    Box Elder
    Dodson
    East Evergreen
    East Glacier Park
    Frazer
    Harlem
    Heart Butte
    Lakeside
    Morningside
    Rocky Boy
    Stevensville
    West-Butte

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

MONTANA READING FIRST
COHORT I PRINCIPAL SURVEY 2008

Responses were received from 18 principals. Unless otherwise noted, the N for each item is equal or approximate to this number.

This survey is part of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's (NWREL) external evaluation of Montana Reading First. **Your input is critically important; this survey is the only opportunity we have to hear from every principal involved in Montana Reading First.** There are no right or wrong responses. Please be candid in your answers. **The information you provide will be kept confidential and reported only in combination with responses from the other Reading First schools.**

When answering the questions, please answer according to how your school functioned **this year (2007-2008)**.

The survey will take 5 to 10 minutes to complete. Please return it to your reading coach, sealed in the envelope provided. **If there is no reading coach at your school,** please return it, along with the other materials from your school, to: Tess Bridgman, NWREL Evaluation Program, 101 SW Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204.

Thank you for your assistance.

_____

1. How frequently did you attend Reading First professional development or state meetings this year?

      5%   did not attend *(skip to Q5)*
     22%   once
     22%   twice
     39%   3 times
     6%   4 times
     6%   5 or more times

If you attended any Reading First training, please answer the following questions.

I am very pleased with…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. The <u>quality</u> of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	-	-	6%	65%	29%
3. The <u>amount</u> of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	-	-	12%	71%	17%
4. If you were not pleased, was there too much or too little?	- Too much			17% Too little	

Please indicate the frequency with which you use reading assessment results.

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
5. Communicating with teachers about their students.	-	5%	18%	18%	59%	5%
6. Communicating with teachers about their instruction.	-	5%	28%	28%	39%	-
7. Looking at school-wide (K-3) trends.	-	-	28%	-	72%	-

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below. If a question is not applicable, please leave it blank.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. Major initiatives (programs or grants) in our district contradict or are not aligned with the reading program in our school.	50%	33%	6%	11%	-
9. Overcoming teacher resistance to continuing the Reading First program has been a challenge for me.	17%	55%	17%	11%	-
10. I strongly support the instructional changes made under Reading First.	-	-	-	33%	67%
11. Our district supports the continuation of Reading First practices in our school.	-	-	5%	28%	67%
12. Our school has an organized system for underlinen administering Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS).	-	-	-	11%	89%
13. Our school has an organized system for underline analyzing and sharing the results of the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments with teachers.	-	-	-	39%	61%

Please indicate if the following Reading First components were adequately or not adequately funded in your school this year.

		Adequately Funded	**Not Adequately Funded**
14.	Reading Leadership Team	76%	24%
15.	Grade-level meetings	100%	-
16.	Core program	83%	17%
17.	DIBELS	94%	6%
18.	Reading coach	56%	44%
19.	Professional development in reading	59%	41%
20.	Interventions	72%	28%

21. How many K-3 teachers are on your staff this year?
    Range 4-44 Average 12

22. Of those teachers, how many were new to the school this year?
    Range 0-4   Average 2

23. How many years have you been principal at this school?
    Range 1-14 Average 6

24. How many years were you principal at any school with a RF grant (including your current school)?
    Range 0-14   Average 4

25. Did your school make AYP in 2006-07?
    - 67%   Yes
    - 11%   No, because of <u>both</u> math and reading scores
    - 17%   No, because of reading score
    - 5%   No, because of math score

26. At which school do you work? *Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.*

1	Centerville
1	Charlo
1	Crow Agency
1	Dixon
1	Eastgate
1	Hardin Intermediate
1	Hardin Primary
1	Hays/Lodge Pole
1	Kennedy
1	KW Harvey
1	Libby
1	Longfellow
1	Newman
1	Pablo
1	Ponderosa
1	Radley
1	Warren
-	West West-GF
1	Whittier

27. Does your school have a reading coach?

    83%   Yes
    17%o No

If no, please complete the remaining questions.
If yes, please return this survey to your reading coach in the envelope provided.

28. How many visits did your school receive from state project staff (e.g., State Reading Specialists) this year?
o   none (skip to Q8)
o   one
o   two
o   three
o   four
o   5 or more

29. The number of visits from state project staff was:
□   Too many
□   Too few
□   Not enough

30. How helpful were visits from state project staff (e.g., State Reading Specialists)
o   Not at all helpful
o   Somewhat helpful
o   Very helpful
o   Did not take place

Please indicate the number of minutes (do not round).

Grade	How many minutes long is the reading block?	Are at least 90 minutes uninterrupted?
31. Half-day kindergarten	___ ___ ___	□ Yes □ No
32. Full-day kindergarten	___ ___ ___	□ Yes □ No
33. First	___ ___ ___	□ Yes □ No
34. Second	___ ___ ___	□ Yes □ No
35. Third	___ ___ ___	□ Yes □ No

36. Our K-3 teachers continue to teach from the same core reading program(s) we used last year.
    Yes
    No

37. Fidelity to the core program is _____ than last year.
    More strict
    About the same
    Less strict

38. Does your school have a Reading Leadership Team?
    Yes
    No

39. How often did your Reading Leadership Team meet, on average? ***(select one)***
    Never
    Once or a few times a year
    Every other month
    Once a month
    Every other week
    Once a week
    More than once a week

40. Did your school administer the benchmark DIBELS assessment in the fall, winter, and spring?
    Yes, to all K-3 students
    Yes, to some K-3 students
    No

41. In about what proportion of K-3 classrooms at your school would you say that regular progress monitoring is implemented?
    All classrooms
    Nearly all classrooms
    About three-quarters of classrooms
    About half of classrooms
    About a quarter of classrooms
    Fewer than a quarter of classrooms
    No classrooms

42. How many students will have received **intensive interventions** this year (from September 2006 to June 2007)?
    "Intensive interventions" occur outside the reading block, <u>at least 2 hours per week for at least 6 weeks</u>. Count any individual student only once, even if he/she has received interventions for more than one session or term. If you do not have exact numbers, please provide the best estimate that you can. (bubble in number, up to 999)

43. How many other students *(not counted in the previous question)* will have received **less intensive interventions** (outside the reading block, less than two hours per week and/or less than six weeks)? (bubble in number, up to 999)

44. This year we have provided interventions to
    Substantially more students than last year
    Slightly more students than last year
    About the same number of students as last year
    Slightly fewer students than last year
    Substantially fewer students than last year

45. What is the largest number of intensive students that work at one time with an intervention provider? (bubble in number, up to 99)

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

MONTANA READING FIRST
COHORT I COACH SURVEY 2008

Responses were received from 16 coaches. Unless otherwise noted, the N for each item is equal or approximate to this number.

This survey is part of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's (NWREL) external evaluation of Montana Reading First. **Your input is critically important; this survey is the only opportunity we have to hear from every coach involved in Montana Reading First.** Please be candid in your answers. There are no right or wrong responses. **The information you provide will be kept confidential and reported only in combination with responses from other Reading First coaches.**

When answering the questions, please answer according to how your school functioned **this year (2007-2008)**.

The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. Please return it, along with the other materials from your school, to: Tess Bridgman, NWREL Evaluation Program, 101 SW Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204.

1.   How frequently did you attend Reading First professional development or state meetings this year?

    6%   did not attend *(skip to Q5)*
    -    once
    6%   twice
    63% 3 times
    12% 4 times
    13% 5 or more times

If you attended any Reading First training, please answer the following questions.

I am very pleased with…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. the <u>quality</u> of training in coaching methods that I received through Reading First this year.	-	-	-	53%	47%
3. the <u>amount</u> of training in coaching methods that I received through Reading First this year.	-	-	26%	47%	27%

4. If you were not pleased, was there too much or too little?	- Too much	25% Too little

5.   How many visits did your school receive from state project staff (e.g., State Reading Specialists) this year?
   -    none (skip to Q8)
   - 6%   one
   - 25%   two
   - 38%   three
   - 12%   four
   - 19%   5 or more

6.   The number of visits from state project staff was:
   - Too many
   - Too few
   - Not enough

7.   How helpful were visits from state project staff (e.g., State Reading Specialists)
   -    not at all helpful
   - 13% rarely helpful
   - 31% somewhat helpful
   - 56% helpful
   -    very helpful
   -    did not take place

Please indicate the number of minutes (do not round).

Grade	How many minutes long is the reading block?	Are at least 90 minutes uninterrupted?	
8. Half-day kindergarten	-	19% Yes	- No
9. Full-day kindergarten	Range 60-120 Average 92	75% Yes	25% No
10. First	Range 60-120 Average 92	93% Yes	7% No
11. Second	Range 60-120 Average 92	93% Yes	7% No
12. Third	Range 60-135 Average 95	93% Yes	7% No

13.   Our K-3 teachers continue to teach from the same core reading program(s) we used last year.
   - 80%   Yes
   - 20%   No

14.   Fidelity to the core program is _____ than last year.
   - 13%   More strict
   - 87%   About the same
   -     Less strict

15. Does your school have a Reading Leadership Team?
      87%   Yes
      13%   No

16. How often did your Reading Leadership Team meet, on average? *(select one)*
      -      Never
      -      Once or a few times a year
      14%   Every other month
      79%   Once a month
      -      Every other week
      7%   Once a week or more often

17. Did your school administer the benchmark DIBELS assessment in the fall, winter, and spring?
      100%   Yes, to all K-3 students
      -      Yes, to some K-3 students
      -      No

18. In about what proportion of K-3 classrooms at your school would you say that regular progress monitoring is implemented?
      75%   All classrooms
      19%   Nearly all classrooms
      6%   About three-quarters of classrooms
      -      About half of classrooms
      -      About a quarter of classrooms
      -      Fewer than a quarter of classrooms
      -      No classrooms

19. How many students will have received **intensive interventions** this year (from September 2006 to June 2007)?
"Intensive interventions" occur outside the reading block, <u>at least 2 hours per week for at least 6 weeks</u>. Count any individual student only once, even if he/she has received interventions for more than one session or term. If you do not have exact numbers, please provide the best estimate that you can.
Range 10-79   Average 33

20. How many other students *(not counted in the previous question)* will have received **less intensive interventions** (outside the reading block, less than two hours per week and/or less than six weeks)?
Range 5-156   Average 57

21. This year we have provided interventions to
      27%   Substantially more students than last year
      27%   Slightly more students than last year
      46%   About the same number of students as last year
      -      Slightly fewer students than last year
      -      Substantially fewer students than last year

22. What is the largest number of intensive students that work at one time with an intervention provider?
23.   Range 4-33 Average 8

24. As a reading coach, how many hours a week do you work at this job, on average?
      Range 6-51 Average 33

25. On average, how many hours per week do you spend on the following tasks?

    a.   Coordinating or administering reading assessments
        Range 0-35%   Average 10%
    b.   Managing data (entering data, creating charts, etc.)
        Range 0-20%   Average 11%
    c.   Reviewing and using reading assessment data
        Range 0-30%   Average9%
    d.   Attending professional development
        Range 0-14%   Average3%
    e.   Planning for and attending Reading Leadership Team and grade-level meetings
        Range 0-17%   Average 7%
    f.   Training groups of teachers in grades K-3
        Range 0-17%   Average 6%
    g.   Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades K-3
        Range 2-37%   Average 17%
    h.   Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades 4-6
        Range 0-37%   Average 7%
        i.   Training groups of teachers in grades 4-6
        Range 0-17%   Average 3%
    j.   Planning interventions
        Range 0-17%   Average 5%
    k.   Providing interventions directly to students
        Range 0-43%   Average 7%
    l.   Covering or subbing for teachers
        Range 0-10%   Average 1%
    m.   Paperwork
        Range 0-20%   Average 7%
    n.   Bus/recess duty
        Range 0-7%   Average 1%
    o.   Other
        Range 0-36%   Average 5%

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. If a question is not applicable, leave it blank.

This year...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
26. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at my school.	6%	-	6%	31%	57%
27. I strongly support the instructional changes made under Reading First.	-	-	6%	6%	88%
28. I am fully confident that before each benchmark testing period, all members of our assessment team thoroughly understand the administration and scoring of the DIBELS.	-	6%	-	13%	81%
29. My school's intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	-	-	13%	31%	56%
30. My school does an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	-	6%	13%	37%	44%
31. My school has a collaborative culture.	-	-	-	56%	44%

32.   What is your position at this school?
   31%   Full time coach
   69%   Part time coach
   -       Principal *(skip to Q31)*
   -       Assistant principal *(skip to Q31)*

33.   How many years have you been coach at this school (including this year)?
   Range 1-9 Average 5

34.   How many total years coaching experience do you have (including this year)?
   Range 1-9 Average 5

35.   How many years teaching experience do you have (prior to becoming a coach)?
   Range 4-30 Average 19

36.   What are your educational credentials? (select as many as apply)
   63%   Bachelor's degree
   19%   Reading certification
          Master's degree
            25% In reading
            25% In area of education other than reading
   -         In discipline other than education
   -         Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)

37.   At which school do you work? *Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school.*
        Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.

1	Centerville
1	Charlo
1	Crow Agency
1	Dixon
1	Eastgate
1	Hardin Intermediate
1	Hardin Primary
1	Hays/Lodge Pole
1	Kennedy
1	KW Harvey
1	Libby
-	Longfellow
1	Newman
1	Pablo
1	Ponderosa
1	Radley
-	Warren
-	West-GF
1	Whittier

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

MONTANA READING FIRST
COHORT I TEACHER SURVEY 2008

Responses were received from 187 teachers. Unless otherwise noted, the N for each item is equal or approximate to this number.

This survey is part of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's (NWREL) external evaluation of Montana Reading First. **Your input is critically important; this survey is the only opportunity we have to hear from every teacher involved in Montana Reading First.** Please be candid in your answers. There are no right or wrong responses. **The information you provide will be kept confidential and reported only in combination with responses from other Reading First teachers.**

When answering the questions, please answer according to how your school functioned **this year (2007-2008)**.

The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. **Please return it to your reading coach sealed in the envelope provided.** If there is no reading coach at your school, please return it to your principal sealed in the envelope provided.

Thank you for your assistance.

Please indicate the frequency with which the following activities took place during this school year (2007-2008).

This year, how often did…	Never	Once or a few times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	1-3 times a week	Daily
1. the principal observe your classroom during the reading block?	2%	18%	12%	16%	37%	15%
2. the principal provide you with feedback on your instruction?	10%	41%	18%	19%	10%	2%
3. the reading coach observe your classroom during the reading block?	6%	35%	16%	16%	20%	7%
4. the reading coach provide you with feedback on your instruction?	12%	35%	20%	19%	12%	2%
5. attend a grade-level reading meeting?	5%	13%	23%	35%	22%	2%
6. you look at reading assessment data?	-	8%	24%	26%	32%	10%
7. you need to use the 90-minute reading block to work on non-reading instruction or tasks? (i.e. writing, science, math, field trips, administrative tasks)	60%	33%	3%	-	1%	3%

8. This year, the **amount** of professional development I received in reading was…
    - 9%   Much more than last year
    - 10%   Sightly more than last year
    - 34%   About the same as last year
    - 25%   Slightly less than last year
    - 22%   Much less than last year

9. This year, the **quality** of professional development I received in reading was…
    - 9%   Much better than last year
    - 9%   Slightly better than last year
    - 68%   About the same as last year
    - 6%   slightly worse than last year
    - 8%   Much worse than last year

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
10. Grouping students into small-instructional groups within my classroom.	3%	5%	11%	32%	49%	7%
11. Communicating with colleagues about reading instruction and student needs.	1%	2%	14%	44%	39%	1%
12. Looking at school-wide (K-3) trends.	3%	9%	27%	29%	32%	6%
13. Identifying which students need interventions.	-	1%	5%	22%	72%	2%

14. This year, I used the core reading program during the reading block:
    - 21%   More than last year
    - 76%   About the same as last year
    - 3%   Less than last year

15. This year, I used the templates during the reading block:
    - 25%   More than last year
    - 41%   About the same amount as last year
    - 6%   Less than last year
    - 28%   I don't use the templates

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. If a question is not applicable, leave it blank.

	This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
16.	Overall, the professional development I received in reading was on-going and intensive.	6%	24%	29%	35%	6%
17.	Overall, the professional development I received in reading focused on what happens in the classroom.	7%	12%	19%	57%	5%
18.	Our school has a visible and effective Reading Leadership Team.	4%	15%	18%	43%	20%
19.	Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	5%	7%	21%	45%	22%
20.	I strongly support the instructional changes made under Reading First.	3%	7%	25%	42%	23%
21.	Our school has an organized system for <u>administering</u> Reading First assessments (such as DIBLES).	1%	1%	1%	43%	54%
22.	Our school has an organized system for <u>analyzing and sharing</u> Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS) with teachers.	1%	3%	6%	45%	45%
23.	I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	5%	12%	21%	35%	27%
24.	Our school's intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	1%	13%	11%	39%	36%
25.	Our school does an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	3%	15%	11%	37%	34%
26.	Our school has a collaborative culture.	4%	10%	14%	46%	26%

27.   What is your primary teaching role this year? *(select one)*

    88%   Regular classroom teacher
    ___   Specialist (select one)
           __-_ Speech/language
           7% Language arts/reading (e.g., Title I, reading specialist)
           1%   Library
           3% Special education
           1% ESL/bilingual
    __-_ Paraprofessional
    __-_ I do not work directly with students

28. This year, which grade(s) do you teach <u>during the reading block</u>? For example, you might teach first- and second-grade students. (select all that apply).

24% Grade K 28% Grade 1 29% Grade 2 26% Grade 3 5% Other	
2% I do not provide direct classroom instruction during the reading block.	

29. How many years teaching experience do you have?
Range 1-39   Average 15

30. How many years have you worked at this school?
Range 1-33   Average 9

31. What are your educational credentials? *(select as many as apply)*

85% Bachelor's degree
16% Traditional teacher certification
- Emergency teacher certification
10% Reading certification
Master's degree
     11%   In reading
     18%   In area of education other than reading
     1%   In discipline other than education
- Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)

32. At which school do you work? *Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.*

2% Centerville
3% Charlo
6% Crow Agency
2% Dixon
8% Eastgate
3% Hardin Intermediate
9% Hardin Primary
3% Hays/Lodge Pole
5% Kennedy
7% KW Harvey
11% Libby
7% Longfellow
4% Newman
7% Pablo
5% Ponderosa
6% Radley
6% Warren
- West-GF
6% Whittier

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

MONTANA READING FIRST
ONLINE DISTRICT SURVEY 2008

This survey is part of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's (NWREL) external evaluation of Montana Reading First. This survey should be completed by the person in your district who is the designated Reading First coordinator; if there is more than one such person, or no such person, please have the person who spends the most time on Reading First complete this survey.

Your input is critically important; this survey is the only opportunity we have to hear from every district involved in Montana Reading First. There are no right or wrong responses. Please be candid in your answers. **The information you provide will be kept confidential and reported only in combination with responses from other district coordinators.**

When answering the questions, please answer according to how your district functioned **this year (2007-2008)**.

---

1. How many elementary schools are in your district?

COHORT 1 (N=7)		COHORT 2 (N=5)	
Mean Number	**Range**	**Mean Number**	**Range**
6	1–15	5	1–15

2. How many elementary schools have a Reading First grant?

COHORT 1		COHORT 2	
Mean Number	**Range**	**Mean Number**	**Range**
2	1–3	2	1–3

3. Beyond Reading First, what is your role in the district?

	COHORT 1 (N=7)	COHORT 2 (N=5)
Superintendent	14% (1)	40% (2)
Assistant Superintendent	--	--
Curriculum director/specialist	29% (2)	20% (1)
Instruction director/specialist	--	--
Literacy director/specialist	14% (1)	20% (1)
Budget/finance officer	--	--
Other:	43% (3)	20% (1)

4. What percentage of time are you *officially allocated* to spend on Reading First?

COHORT 1		COHORT 2	
Percent	Range	Percent	Range
9%	0–25%	28%	0–100%

5. In past years, some district coordinators have reported spending more time than anticipated on Reading First activities. In order to report any continuing discrepancies, please report the *actual* percentage of your time spent on Reading First.

COHORT 1		COHORT 2	
Percent	**Range**	**Percent**	**Range**
13%	2%–25%	25%	5%–80%

6. How has your district supported Reading First this year? *(select all that apply)*

	COHORT 1	COHORT 2
Assisted with proposal writing	29% (2)	40% (2)
Provided financial management of the grant	86% (6)	100% (5)
Assigned a district staff member to be the Reading First "go-to" person (district-level coordinator)	100% (7)	100% (5)
Facilitated districtwide Reading First meetings for coaches	57% (4)	60% (3)
Facilitated districtwide Reading First meetings for principals	71% (5)	60% (3)
Analyzed student reading assessment data	100% (7)	100% (5)
Provided professional development aligned with Reading First	100% (7)	100% (4)
Provided technical assistance for Reading First	71% (5)	80% (4)
Provided additional funds to support Reading First	86% (6)	60% (3)
Provided a DIBELS Assessment Team	86% (6)	100% (5)
Modified district requirements to be aligned with Reading First	57% (4)	60% (3)
Other:	29% (2)	--

7.   In 2007-2008, how frequently did you attend the following activities?

COHORT 1

	Did not attend	Once	Twice	3 times	4 + times
Statewide coach and principal meetings	83% (5)	17% (1)	--	--	--
State meetings for district representatives	67% (4)	17% (1)	--	17% (1)	--
Meetings with the Reading First State Reading Specialist for our district	29% (2)	--	--	14% (1)	57% (4)

COHORT 2

	Did not attend	Once	Twice	3 times	4 + times
Statewide coach and principal meetings	80% (4)	20% (1)	--	--	--
State meetings for district representatives	80% (4)	20% (1)	--	--	--
Meetings with the Reading First State Reading Specialist for our district	20% (1)	20% (1)	--	20% (1)	40% (2)

8.   How useful, to you as Reading First coordinator, was your attendance at the following:

COHORT 1

	Never Useful	Rarely Useful	Sometimes Useful	Usually Useful	Always Useful	Did not Attend
Statewide coach and principal meetings	--	--	--	--	17% (1)	83% (5)
State meetings for district representatives	--	--	17% (1)	--	17% (1)	67% (4)
Meetings with the Reading First State Reading Specialist for our district	--	--	--	--	57% (4)	43% (3)

COHORT 2

	Never Useful	Rarely Useful	Sometimes Useful	Usually Useful	Always Useful	Did not Attend
Statewide coach and principal meetings	--	--	20% (1)	--	--	80% (4)
State meetings for district representatives	--	--	20% (1)	--	--	80% (4)
Meetings with the Reading First State Reading Specialist for our district	--	--	--	40% (2)	40% (2)	20% (1)

9.   When the State Reading Specialist visits schools in your district, how often do you participate?

	COHORT 1	COHORT 2
Never	--	
Seldom	57% (4)	20% (1)
Sometimes	14% (1)	20% (1)
Often	14% (1)	40% (2)
Always	14% (1)	20% (1)

10.   (a)   Does your district have a mentoring or induction program for new teachers?

	COHORT 1	COHORT 2
Yes	86% (6)	100% (5)
No	14% (1)	--

(b)   If yes, does it include an introduction to Reading First?

	COHORT 1	COHORT 2
Yes	67% (4)	80% (4)
No	33% (2)	20% (2)

11.   How easy/difficult was it to find qualified applicants for the coaching position(s)?

	COHORT 1	COHORT 2
Very Easy	14% (1)	--
Somewhat Easy	29% (2)	40% (2)
Somewhat difficult	14% (1)	40% (2)
Very Difficult	14% (1)	20% (1)
Not Involved, Don't Know, N/A	29% (2)	--

COHORT 1
Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below.

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. The state's expectations for district involvement in Reading First are clear.	--	--	--	57% (4)	43% (3)
13. State Reading First project staff (directors, State Reading Specialists) are responsive to our district's needs.	--	--	--	29% (2)	71% (5)
14. The State Reading Specialist's support and input has been extremely valuable.	--	--	--	29% (2)	71% (5)
15. The state has done a good job of communicating necessary information regarding Reading First to district staff.	--	--	--	43% (3)	57% (4)
16. Our district strongly supports the instructional changes occurring under Reading First.	--	--	14% (1)	14% (1)	71% (5)

This year…		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
17.	Major initiatives (programs or grants) in our district contradict or are not aligned with Reading First.	43% (3)	43% (3)	14% (1)	--	--
18.	I am pleased with the amount of support we have received from the state to address sustainability.	--	--	14% (1)	29% (2)	57% (4)
19.	Reading First has greatly influenced the reading program in our district's non-Reading First schools.	--	--	17% (1)	17% (1)	67% (4)
20.	The state's expectations of district involvement in Reading First are reasonable.	--	--	--	71% (5)	29% (2)
21.	The state's expectations for district involvement in Reading First are clear.	--	--	--	60% (3)	40% (2)
22.	State Reading First project staff (directors, State Reading Specialists) are responsive to our district's needs.				40% (2)	60% (3)
23.	The State Reading Specialist's support and input has been extremely valuable.				60% (3)	40% (2)
24.	The state has done a good job of communicating necessary information regarding Reading First to district staff.				80% (4)	20% (1)
25.	Our district strongly supports the instructional changes occurring under Reading First.				20% (1)	80% (4)
26.	Major initiatives (programs or grants) in our district contradict or are not aligned with Reading First.	40% (2)	40% (2)	20% (1)	--	--
27.	I am pleased with the amount of support we have received from the state to address sustainability.				80% (4)	20% (1)
28.	Reading First has greatly influenced the reading program in our district's non-Reading First schools.				50% (2)	50% (2)
29.	The state's expectations of district involvement in Reading First are reasonable.				60% (3)	40% (2)

COHORT 1

	After grant funding ends, will the following Reading First components be <u>mandated</u> by the district?				If yes, how will they be funded?			
	Definitely	**Likely**	**Not Likely**	**Don't Know**	**General Funds**	**Categorical Funds**	**Other Funds**	**Don't know**
90-minute reading block	86% (6)	14% (1)	--	--				
Reading Leadership Team	57% (4)	29% (2)	--	14% (1)	67% (4)	--	17% (1)	17% (1)
Grade-level meetings	86% (6)	14% (1)	--	--	86% (5)	--	--	14% (1)
Core program	86% (60	14% (1)		--	57% (4)	14% (1)		29% (2)
DIBELS	71% (5)	14% (1)	14% (1)	--	83% (5)	--	17% (1)	--
Reading coach	14% (1)	57% (40	29% (2)	--	--	33% (2)	33% (2)	33% (2)
Professional development in reading	43% (3)	57% (4)	--	--	29% (2)	14% (1)	57% (4)	--
Interventions	57% (4)	43% (3)	--	--	14% (1)	29% (2)	43% (3)	14% (1)

COHORT 2

	After grant funding ends, will the following Reading First components be <u>mandated</u> by the district?				If yes, how will they be funded?			
	Definitely	**Likely**	**Not Likely**	**Don't Know**	**General Funds**	**Categorical Funds**	**Other Funds**	**Don't know**
90-minute reading block	100% (5)	--	--	--				
Reading Leadership Team	60% (3)	20% (1)	20% (1)		25% (1)		50% (2)	25% (1)
Grade-level meetings	100% (5)	--	--	--	60% (3)		20% (1)	20% (1)
Core program	100% (5)	--	--	--	80% (4)	20% (1)	--	--
DIBELS	75% (3)	25% (1)	--	--	60% (3)	--	20% (1)	20% (1)
Reading coach	60% (3)		40% (2)	--	33% (1)	--	67% (2)	--
Professional development in reading	100% (5)	--	--	--	40% (2)		40% (2)	20% (1)
Interventions	100% (5)				20% (1)	20% (1)	60% (3)	--

22. In which district do you work? *Your district name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each district. Your responses are confidential and no district names will be used in reporting.*

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

APPENDIX B

Interview Instruments

| **Montana Reading First** |
| **Principal Interview 2008** |

Professional Development & Technical Assistance

1.   Here is a list of the primary trainings to date *(show list)* that you have received
      from the state this year.

      (a) What stands out as especially useful? Why?

      (b) What stands out as especially not useful? Why?

      (c) Overall, as a professional development package, how well did these offerings
          meet your needs as principal? (Please explain.)

      (d) If you missed any principal/coach meetings this year, what caused you to do
          so?

2.   (a) How helpful have state Reading First project staff (Debbie and Minda) been
      this year? Why?

      (b) What about your State Reading Specialist?

3.   What other services or training could the state provide to **you as a Reading First
      principal**?

Leadership

4.   What does the state expect from you as a Reading First principal?

5.   Are some of those expectations more challenging than others? Which ones?
      Why?

6.   a) What Reading First responsibilities fall to the coach?
      b) How do you support the coach in implementing Reading First in your school?

7.   Tell me about principal walk-throughs at your school.

      (a) On average, how often do you observe a given teacher? (___ per ___)

      (b) What checklists or tools, if any, do you use during walk-throughs?
      (c) How much priority do you think should be placed on principal walk-
          throughs? Why?

8.   How helpful has the district been with Reading First this year? Please explain.

Buy-In

9.   How would you currently describe teachers' buy-in to Reading First? *(select one)*
       o   High
       o   Medium/Mixed
       o   Low

10.   To what do you attribute this level of buy-in?

11.   How do you work with resistance?

Communication & Collaboration

12.   Do you think that attending Reading Leadership Team meetings is a good use of your time? Why or why not?

13.   What about grade-level meetings; is it a good use of your time to attend them? Why or why not?

Sustainability

14.   (a) What is the typical level of turnover of K-3 classroom teachers in your building? (percentage)

       (b) How do you bring new teachers up to speed on Reading First?

15.   (a) In your opinion, what are this school's prospects for sustaining Reading First without the grant money (or with reduced grant money)?

       (b) What has the state done to help you prepare for the end of the grant?

       (c) What else can the state do to support your school in sustaining Reading First?

Overall

16.   Is there anything else about Reading First in your school you think I should know?

| Montana Reading First |
| Coach Interview 2008 |

Professional Development & Technical Assistance

1. Here is a list of the primary trainings to date (*show list*) that you have received form the state this year.

     (a) What stands out as especially useful? Why?

     (b) What stands out as especially not useful? Why?

     (c) Overall, as a professional development package, how well did these offerings meet your needs as a coach? (Please explain.)

2. State Reading Specialists:

     (a) How helpful has your State Reading Specialist been this year? Why?

     (b) What is the relationship (tone, feeling) between the State Reading Specialist and your school? (Please explain.)

3. How have you utilized Knowledge Box? Do you feel it has been a valuable tool in implementing Reading First? Why or why not?

4. What did the Reading First training offered to teachers in summer 2007 look like? How was it received by teachers?

5. What other services or training could the state or State Reading Specialist provide to **you as a Reading First Coach?**

Coaching Role

6. (a) Thinking about your job as a coach, what are the two or three things you spend most of your   time on? *(If they say: it depends, ask on what and see if that can get them to still identify the top things they do)*

   (b) How is this different from how you spent your time last year? *(acceptable responses: it isn't   different; new coach so not applicable)*

   (c) If it is different, what would you say has made it change?

7. How does your principal support you in implementing Reading First in your school?

8. (a) Some coaches say they are not able to get into classrooms as much as they would like to or   feel they should. To what degree has this been an issue for you?

   (b) If it is an issue, what prevents you from spending more time in classrooms?

9. Tell me about working with inexperienced teachers this year, particularly those with 1 to 4 years of   experience.

      (a) Was this part of your role?

      (b) Do new teachers have different needs than veteran teachers? Please describe.

Buy-In

10. How would you currently describe teachers' buy-in to Reading First? (*select one*)

      o   High

      o   Medium/Mixed

      o   Low

11. To what do you attribute this level of buy-in?

12. How do you work with resistance?

Communication and Collaboration

13. How do you pass on what you learn at state coaches' meetings to teachers?

14. Thinking about your Reading Leadership Team and about what works well and what doesn't work   well in terms of getting things done:

      (a) What works well?

      (b) What does not work well?

15. Thinking about grade-level meetings and about what works well and what doesn't work well in   terms of getting things done:

      (a) What works well?

      (b) What doesn't work well?

16. Tell me about study groups at your school. Have they been useful? Why or why not?

Data and Assessment

17. Think about the work you do to collect and manage data for DIBELS <u>benchmark</u> assessments   throughout the year. Is support for data collection and management for DIBELS benchmark   assessments sufficient? If not, what other supports do you need?

18. This year, have there been any concerns about DIBELS <u>benchmark</u> administration and scoring? If   so, what were they?

19. Think about the work you do to collect and manage data for **progress monitoring** throughout the year. Is support for data collection and management for progress monitoring sufficient? If not, what other supports do you need?

20. This year, have there been any concerns about **progress monitoring** administration and   scoring? If so, what were they?

21. How, if at all, are teachers involved in data collection and management? *(Note: This refers to   benchmark and progress monitoring.)*

22. To what extent does your principal lead student data analyses and use those in discussions with   teachers—either individually and/or in larger groups (grade level, Reading Leadership Team)?

23. (a) Do you think that your school is using data to its full potential?

  (b) Why or why not?

  (c) If not, what does your school need to make better use of data?

Instruction and Intervention

24. (a) How much do teachers modify the core program? (Please provide a specific example.)

  (b) What kinds of modifications are considered inappropriate? (Please provide at least one specific   example.)

25. (a) Have your teachers been working on a specific aspect of instruction this year (for example, a   focus on one component or a skill such as student engagement)?

  (b) Why was this chosen as a focus?

  (c) What changes have you seen in this area?

26. The next few questions are about your intervention program. They refer only to interventions   provided <u>outside</u> of the reading block.

> (a) What have been the biggest achievements in your school's K–3 reading intervention
>   program this year?

> (b) What have been the biggest challenges?

> (c) Understanding that there are often limited resources to provide interventions, which
>   students do you focus your energy on? Why? *(For example, strategic or intensive,
>   those closest to benchmark or furthest behind, specific grades?)*

27. Are teachers able to sufficiently differentiate instruction (i.e. tailor instruction to individual students'   needs) during the reading block? Why or why not?

American Indian Students *(Only at schools that serve AI students. If you are unsure, ask).*

28. There is still a wide achievement gap between American Indian and white students. Do you think   Reading First is going to close the achievement gap in reading? If not, why not?

> *(Note to interviewer: If interviewee discusses broader social factors—alcoholism, tardiness, poverty—note that but then steer towards school factors—the core program, interventions, teacher skills/ability, scheduling.)*

Overall

29. In your opinion, what are this school's prospects for sustaining Reading First without the grant   money (or with reduced grant money)?

30. Is there anything else about Reading First in your school you think I should know?

> **Montana Reading First**
> **Teacher Interview 2008**
> **Designed for individual teacher interviews (2 per school, 15-20 minutes each)**

Opening

Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy day to meet with me. I have a few questions for you about Reading First, what it has been like at your school, and what is has meant to you, personally, to have this grant. While we talk, I will be taking (hand or computer) notes to capture your responses to these questions. My notes from today are completely confidential: I will not share anything you say with your colleagues, coach, or principal. The data from our interview here go into a big pool of data from teachers at all the schools we are visiting so we can understand, across the state, what some of the overall trends are. Nothing you say will be attached to your name or your school's name. Before I begin, do you have any questions for me?

1. What grade do you currently teach? _____

2. How many years of teaching experience do you have (including this year)? _____
(Note this does not include years being a para/aide but would include years as a specialist.)

3. Did you attend any Reading First training held during summer 2007? If so what stands out as especially useful? Why? What stands out as especially not useful? Why? If you did not attend, why not?

4. In Reading First, there is often an expectation to closely follow the core program. At your school, to what degree are you expected to follow the core program? In your opinion, are these expectations reasonable?

5a. Does your school have an intervention program outside the reading block for struggling readers? If no, why not? (If yes, go to (b).)

5b. In your school's intervention program, what is working well and what is not working?

6. Has your coach helped you change your instruction this year? If so, how (please provide an example)?

7. Do you think that attending grade-level team meetings is a good use of your time? Why or why not?

8. To what degree is Reading First good for you as a teacher? Why?

9. Last year a lot of teachers said that Reading First was not meeting the needs of American Indian students. Has Reading First made a difference for your American Indian students? If yes, how so? If not, why?

Montana Reading First
State Director Telephone Interview Protocol

State and District Support to Reading First Schools

State Reading First Director

1. What would you say are your primary responsibilities as state director? Has that changed at all in the past year?

State Reading Specialists

2. For the state reading specialists, how often are they expected to visit each school?

3. Do they still provide written feedback reports after each visit? Does their feedback continue to incorporate their observations/discussions from during visits, the school's Reading Improvement Plan and action plan, and assessment data? Anything else?

4. Did the reading specialists also facilitate professional development at coach and principal meetings and at the summer training in 2007?

5. Anything new or different in their role? Any particular focus in the schools this year?

Professional Development

6. Why was the summer training moved from a Summer Institute to the elementary sites?

7. What can you tell me about the Montana Reading Institute? How are schools/staff invited to participate? Will the institute continue to be offered after Reading First? Is state reading specialists' facilitation of professional development at the institute part of their Reading First responsibilities?

Knowledge Box

8. Anything new with Knowledge Box this year?

Study Groups

9. What is the expectation for study groups: what are they supposed to consist of? How frequently should they meet?

10. Why was Overcoming Dyslexia chosen for this year's topic?

District Support

11. What is expected of district coordinators in terms of: Support to Reading First schools? Support to non-Reading First schools? Attendance at Reading First trainings?

School Structures

Reading Leadership Teams

12. Can you describe what a well-functioning Reading Leadership Team should have looked like this past year? With what frequency are they supposed to meet?

Grade-level Meetings

13. What about grade-level meetings, what is expected to occur during those? How frequently should they occur?

Data

14. What would constitute a good use of assessment data in a Reading First school by principals? Coaches? Teachers?

15. How often should progress monitoring occur for students at intensive, strategic, and benchmark levels?

Expectations of School Level Staff

16. What are the major expectations of principals as instructional leaders in Reading First schools? Any changes from last year?

17. What are the major expectations of coaches? Any changes from last year?

18. For teachers, during the reading block…
   - 90 minutes is the minimum amount of reading instruction?

   - Does this differ for full-day or half-day K?

   - What constitutes good use of the core program?

   - What kinds of modifications are ok (lesson maps, templates, pacing guides)?

   - Do any schools use a replacement core? Are there any requirements around their use?

   - Students should be taught at their grade level or instructional level?

   - How much whole- versus small-group work?

   - Are schools encouraged to use walk-to-read?

   - Do schools used workshop or universal access time outside the block?

   - Is there anything else that should be happening in the classroom?

Interventions

19. What would you expect a well-functioning intervention program to look like?
   - Does the state have a preference for which students are targeted (intensive versus strategic)? Why? How long should interventions last? With what frequency should they occur? What should the group size be? Does Montana Reading First provide guidance on selecting materials?   What would you expect in terms of who provides interventions? What kinds of training should they receive?

Sustainability

20. What services did the state provide to cohort 1 schools this year? Did that change from last year?

21. How did the state address sustainability with cohort 2 schools this year?

APPENDIX C

Support for Reading First

Table 7-1
Percentages of District, Principal, Coach, and Teacher Respondents Indicating Support for Reading First, by Cohort[3]

Item	District		Principals		Coaches		Teachers	
	Cohort 1 2006	Cohort 2 2008	Cohort 1 2006	Cohort 2 2008	Cohort 1 2006	Cohort 2 2008	Cohort 1 2006	Cohort 2 2008
I am pleased that our school has a Reading First grant.	--	--	100%	100%	100%	100%	77%	67%
I have significant philosophical or pedagogical objections to the approach of Reading First.	--	--	5%	9%	0%	0%	21%	13%
I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First.			100%	91%	95%	92%	68%	62%
Instruction in other subjects has suffered because of all of the focus on Reading First.	--		35%	59%	33%	33%	63%	66%
Principal and Coach: I believe the instructional changes we made under Reading First will be sustained after the grant is over. Teacher: When our school no longer has Reading First funding, I think that I will go back to more or less the way I was teaching reading before.	--		82%	92%	83%	67%	5%	9%
Overcoming teacher resistance to Reading First has been a challenge for me.	--	--	21%	46%	26%	75%	--	--
Reading Leadership Team	--	60%	82%	55%	--	--	32%/73%	28%/72%
Reading Coach	--	60%	94%	42%	--	--	47%/70%	37%/63%
Grade-level meetings	--	100%	100%	67%	--	--	51%/91%	40%/93%
DIBELS	--	75%	100%	75%	--	--	55%/92%	44%/87%
90-minute reading block	--	100%	100%	83%	--	--	69%/95%	46%/85%
Core program	--	100%	100%	83%	--	--	71%/97%	50%/93%
Professional development in reading	--	100%	94%	50%	--	--	57%/93%	52%/96%

[3] For the first six items percentages are respondents who "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" with the item. For the last seven items percentages reflect: 2008 cohort 2 district coordinators responding "Definitely" to the item "After grant funding ends, will the following Reading First components be mandated by the district?"; 2006 cohort 1 principals responding "Yes" to the item "Which of the following Reading First program components do you plan to continue?" 2008 cohort 2 principals responding "Definitely" to the item "After grant funding ends, will the following Reading First components be continued at your school?" 2006 cohort 1 teachers responding "Definitely yes" to the item "In your opinion once your school no longer has the Reading First grant, which of the following program components would you like to see continue?" 2008 cohort 2 teachers responding "Definitely yes" to the item "In your opinion, once your school no longer has the Reading First grant, should the following program components continue?" For teachers, the second figure represents the combined response of "Probably yes" and "Definitely yes."